



Rabin names new army commander

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Tuesday named Major General Ilan Baran head of Israel's central command, which includes the occupied West Bank, the army said in a statement. Gen. Baran is to supervise the army's pullout from the West Bank region of Jericho in coming weeks as part of Israel's agreement on limited Palestinian self-rule in Jericho and the Gaza Strip. Gen. Baran, 48, is currently commander of the ordnance corps, but has spent most of his life in the Golan infantry brigades. Prior to his appointment as ordnance head in 1989, he led the army's operational command and is famous for leading the improvised division that took west Beirut during Israel's 1982 Lebanon war. He has served in the army since 1964, and his training includes a stint at a marines command school in the United States, the statement said. He also spent 1992-1993 studying strategy and economic policy at Georgetown University's school of diplomacy. Gen. Baran, whose appointment takes effect on Sunday, replaces Maj. Gen. Danny Yatom.

Jordan Times

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جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية 'الرأي'

Jordan receives Qatari invitation

AMMAN (R) — Qatar invited Jordan on Tuesday to attend the fifth round of multilateral Middle East peace talks on disarmament due to open in Doha on May 2, official sources said. Amman has linked resumed peace talks with Israel to the end of searches of Jordan-bound ships by a U.S.-led force policing trade sanctions against Iraq. It has indicated that it might send only an observer to Qatar if the searches continue. Jordan earlier said it was likely to send an observer when Oman hosts multilateral water talks later this month. An Israeli team, the first to make a public visit to a Gulf Arab state, is to attend. The invitation to Doha was handed to Talal Al Hassan, minister of state for foreign affairs, by the ambassador of Qatar — the only Gulf state to hold ministerial-level talks with Israel — and envoys of the United States and Russia. Washington and Moscow are co-sponsoring the two-year-old Middle East peace talks. Gulf Arab states will host two of the five multilateral rounds.

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Kabul under fierce shelling

KABUL (AP) — Thousands of shells hit Afghanistan's battered capital Tuesday as a multinational delegation of Muslim clerics was to arrive to broker an end to the fighting. Two people were killed and 45 others, all civilians, were wounded in battle between rival factions. Fifty-two Muslim clerics arriving in Kabul on Tuesday have asked for a ceasefire, but so far neither side appears willing to stop fighting. A temporary truce brokered by Tunisia's ex-finance minister, Mohamed Mestiri, fell apart over the weekend. Thirty people have been killed and hundreds wounded since.

Israel 'regrets' shooting journalist

TEL AVIV (AP) — An army officer apparently violated orders in shooting an American photographer in a Gaza Strip refugee camp, the army said Tuesday. An army statement said it "regrets" the shooting of John Gaps, 35, a photographer for the Associated Press, who was wounded in the knee by a plastic bullet on March 7. Mr. Gaps said he arrived outside an army base where a demonstration had taken place earlier in the day and photographed an elderly man rolling a tyre off the street. Children would not light it and start a clash. "I was photographing the scene when I noticed a soldier near the gate to the army base about 100 yards away from me. He was down on one knee, in a shooting position. He had a scope on his rifle and he was tracking me," Mr. Gaps said at the time. Mr. Gaps said there were other soldiers near the sniper who saw the incident.

Dutch claims \$490m in Gulf war damages

THE HAGUE (R) — Dutch individuals and companies have filed compensation claims of 950 million guilders (\$490 million) for damages caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday. The ministry is coordinating Dutch claims and forwarding them to a special United Nations fund set up to compensate victims of the invasion that led to the 1991 Gulf war. Last month the fund said it had received \$40 billion worth of claims from individuals, companies and governments, but had just \$20 million in the bank to meet them.

Sudan, U.S. envoy not on speaking terms

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's president says his government has stopped speaking with the U.S. ambassador because the diplomat uses official encounters to "insult Sudan." The government newspaper Al Engaz Al Watani reported Tuesday that Omar Hassan Al Bashir said the only hope for renewed dialogue is for Washington to accept Sudan's Islamic orientation. General Bashir told the paper his government was disappointed because it had hoped for "a sincere, fruitful" dialogue with the United States and Ambassador Donald Petterson.

Yeltsin says his health is top-notch

MADRID (AP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Tuesday laughed off reports that he suffers everything from diabetes of the liver to heart disease, saying he is in top physical condition. Mr. Yeltsin, in Spain on the second day of a three-day official visit (see page 10) planned to visit the Barcelona doctors on Wednesday who treated him for back pains in 1990, but he said the trip was just to thank the physicians for their work. No physical examination was scheduled, he told reporters. Mr. Yeltsin said that his ability to keep up a rigorous work schedule and play tennis and swim during his leisure time showed he was in excellent condition. "I would like all of you to have such good health," he joined with reporters. Opposition politicians in Russia have claimed the 63-year-old Yeltsin suffers from a variety of ailments.

Israel, PLO expect final deal in weeks

Accord confirmed on police force and release of 5,000 prisoners

CAIRO (Agencies) — The chief Israeli and Palestinian negotiators said Tuesday they expect to wrap up a final agreement on Palestinian self-government in the Gaza Strip and Jericho within several weeks. While the two sides still face difficult issues, it was the first time that Israeli Major General Amnon Shahak and Nabil Shaath of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) generally agreed on a timeframe for completing the talks that have dragged on since October. Both reported considerable progress, saying they had concluded schedules for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, the deployment of 9,000 Palestinian police and the release of some 5,000 of the 8,500 Palestinians in Israeli jails. The two also suggested that some technical issues, such as broadcasting channels for Palestinians, might have to be put off and negotiated after the signing of an agreement on self-rule. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in a telephone conversation Tuesday that Israel could not meet the Wednesday deadline for withdrawing its army from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, PLO officials said. Mr. Rabin suggested to Mr. Arafat that the PLO and the Israeli negotiators meeting in Cairo discuss another date to start the withdrawal, said the officials. Israel Radio and the Palestinian news agency Wafa also reported the telephone conversation, but did not report Mr. Rabin's comments about the delayed pullout. Israeli Radio said Mr. Arafat initiated the call and that the

two men agreed to continue discussions next week. American civil rights leader the Rev. Jesse Jackson was with Mr. Rabin during his conversation with Mr. Arafat and urged the PLO leader to condemn the April 6 car bombing in the northern Israeli town of Afula, which killed eight and wounded 35, the broadcast reported. Wafa said Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin "focused on the need to reach tangible results on the ground."

"The discussions also dealt with the importance of removing all obstacles which hinder the peace process in view of the April 13 deadline set for the Israeli withdrawal," Wafa reported.

The agency did not give further details. Mr. Rabin, in an interview published on Tuesday, said he was now hoping for agreement on the details by mid-May.

"We cannot set a date when the agreement will be reached," Mr. Rabin was quoted as saying by the Jerusalem Post. "But if everything goes well, I believe that by sometime in the first half of May, there is hope."

Gen. Shahak and Dr. Shaath held separate news conferences in Cairo after talks adjourned for the Israelis to return home to observe holidays on Wednesday and Thursday. Their statements confirmed that the two sides would miss the second important deadline set in the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO accord, which called for Israel to begin its troop withdrawal Dec. 13 and complete it today, April 13.

The PLO had been pushing for some kind of agreement by the deadline, while Israeli officials said long ago the target would be missed. On Tuesday, Gen. Shahak

urged finishing the negotiations "as soon as possible," and Dr. Shaath echoed the sentiment: "We recognise that it is our responsibility to speed up this process."

Gen. Shahak suggested the Palestinians could be governing themselves within two months. He predicted "a few weeks" of further negotiations and added that the Palestinian authority will take responsibility for governing Gaza and Jericho "no more than three weeks after signing of the agreement."

Dr. Shaath told reporters he foresaw at least two more weeks of talks to reach a settlement. This, he noted, would have to be reviewed by Mr. Rabin's government and the PLO leadership.

Dr. Shaath said Mr. Arafat called his conversation with Mr. Rabin "positive and important."

Both chief negotiators said that of the 9,000 Palestinian police, 7,000 will come from outside Jericho and Gaza. Six thousand will enter the territories immediately after the signing, and the rest in three months.

Palestinian sources close to the talks have said the "outsiders" will be allowed to bring 30,000 to 35,000 family members. That would constitute the first major repatriation of Palestinians since the creation of Israel in 1948 in what had been Palestine.

The policemen will be armed with Kalashnikov automatic rifles and their officers with pistols, Dr. Shaath said. Israel Radio said the force also would have 45 armoured personnel carriers and 120 medium-range machine guns.

On the release of Palestinian prisoners, disagreement continues.

Israeli settler kills pregnant Palestinian; army claims another

AL JIB, Occupied West Bank (Agencies) — A Jewish settler opened fire on houses in this West Bank village on Tuesday, killing a pregnant Palestinian woman as she was cleaning her house, according to witnesses. Elsewhere in the occupied territories, a Palestinian was shot dead in the West Bank and two youths were seriously wounded in the Gaza Strip in clashes. In Ramallah, troops bulldozed a house while searching for fugitives. Fatma Khalayfeh, 18, had given her eight-month-old daughter Baraa some milk and was cleaning a carpet when the bullet came through the front door. Yusra Jawdat Khalayfeh said she was in the next room when she heard Fatma, who was four months pregnant, cry, "Auntie, auntie."

"I went there and saw her lying in blood on the carpet," she said. A reporter saw bloodstains on the blue carpet in a corridor linking the bedroom and the kitchen. Witnesses said that about 10 a.m. an Israeli drove by a row of houses firing a pistol. He stopped near a clump of pine trees, got out of his car and continued to fire as he walked. Abbas Abu Dayah, 27, an electrician said the Israeli, about 35 to 40, wore a baseball cap, had a beard and sun glasses and was riding in a red Mitsubishi car with a Coca Cola sign on the door. "I was putting equipment in my car when I saw a settler shooting from the window at the Arab houses," he said. "I heard him shoot 10 or 12 times."

He said the sounds of gunfire from settlers were heard frequently in the area. "Whenever settlers see four or five Palestinians walking together, they start shooting — with or without stone throwing," said Mr. Abu Dayah. A reporter found what appeared to be a 22-calibre brass bullet casing in front of the Khalayfeh house. There was also a broken pane in the glass of the front door where the bullet apparently entered. Hospital officials said she was struck in the chest. Neighbours said there was frequent stoning of Israeli cars on the road, which links Jewish settlements with the main highway to Jerusalem. School classes let out about 10 minutes before the shooting, and some residents said there was stone throwing.

"I think this will delay the peace process. I'm sure you will not find a single Palestinian here who is supporting the peace process," Bassima Khalayfeh, 28, her sister-in-law, said as tears streamed from her eyes. Other women relatives cried silently nearby and sang a plaintive song of mourning in Arabic.

The army, which imposed a curfew on the village, said the Israeli civilian "shot at stone-throwers," and bullets pierced the door of a house where Khalayfeh lived. A police official said a suspect, Nathan Engelsman, a Jewish settler from the West Bank settlement of Shiloh, was detained at a roadblock near Jerusalem. Engelsman was identified as a 36-year-old father of six em-

ploys as a refrigeration technician for the Coca Cola plant, near the site of the shooting. Ms. Khalayfeh's husband, Tayseer, had been employed as a construction worker in Israel until last week, when the occupied territories were sealed following a suicide car-bomb attack in the northern town of Afula that killed seven Israelis.

Tayseer was out looking for work when the shooting occurred, family members said. He went into shock when he came home and heard the news, and could not attend his wife's funeral.

The army imposed a curfew on the village. In Ramallah, the city's 30,000 residents were under curfew as soldiers searched for Palestinian activists in a house belonging to the parents of Abeer Weheidi, who was convicted this week for her part in the 1991 killing of a settler, witnesses said.

Troops bulldozed the house to the ground and arrested Weheidi's parents, but the fugitives escaped, they said. Israel radio reported the Weheidis were close friends of Mr. Arafat.

Also Tuesday, Palestinian witnesses said settlers and troops shot to death Awad Abdullah Abbas, 23, during stone throwing clashes near Jalazoun refugee camp, north of Ramallah.

In Gaza, troops shot two youths, one aged 12 and the other 13, during stone-throwing clashes in Bureij refugee camp, reporters said. Both were in serious condition with head wounds, they said.



KING RECEIVES IRAQI MESSAGE: His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday received a message of "appreciation for Jordan's honourable stands towards Iraq" from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. The message was conveyed to the King by Iraqi Information and Cultural Minister Hamed Youssef Hamadi, who was received in an audience attended by Royal Court Chief Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker and Iraqi Ambassador to Jordan Nouri Ismail Al Wels. The minister conveyed President Saddam's appreciation for Jordan's support for the Iraqi people, particularly following Iraq's observance of all the resolutions issued by the U.N. Security Council during the Gulf crisis, Petra added.

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Austrian president briefed on Jordan's water shortages

AMMAN (Petra) — Austrian President Thomas Klestil on Tuesday visited archaeological and historical sites in Jordan. Mr. Klestil, who arrived in Amman Monday on a three-day state visit, started his tour Tuesday by visiting Umm Qais area where he was briefed on its historical and strategic significance. Then the Austrian president visited the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) premises in Deir Alla and was briefed by JVA Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wishah on endeavours by the government to develop the Jordan Valley.

Dr. Wishah spoke of the water shortages faced by Jordan. He said Jordan shares the

Jordan River water with Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel. The Jordan River basin is divided into three other sub-basins which are the higher tributaries of the Jordan River, the Yarmouk River and the lower Jordan River tributaries. He said the upper Jordan River tributaries are Banyas, Al Hashani and Al Dan rivers, flowing at an average of 660 million cubic metres into Lake Tiberias.

Dr. Wishah said the Yarmouk River, which starts in Jordanian and Syrian territories, flows into the Jordan River south of Lake Tiberias at a rate of 400,000,000 cubic metres annually. He said the lower tributaries of the Jordan River flow into it between Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea.

Jordan, he said, exploits most of the ground water in its territory and about 50 per cent of surface water flowing during the rainy season through establishing dams in valleys. Five dams with a capacity of 110 million cubic metres were established on Jordan's main valleys, he said, adding that if Jordan continues implementing its plans to establish more dams these figures will double, especially if financial problems facing the implementation of these projects are resolved. Dr. Wishah said the Johnston plan, proposed by American mediator Eric Johnston and published by the U.S. State Department in 1956, would be the most viable plan.

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Klestil pays tribute to King

AMMAN (Petra) — Austrian President Thomas Klestil on Tuesday described His Majesty King Hussein as a pioneering political figure in the Middle East. In statements to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, at a reception hosted by the Austrian embassy, Dr. Klestil said King Hussein plays a key role in the Middle East peace process and is working on placing Jordan in a suitable status among the world countries. Austria, he said, will support Jordan politically and economically to help it overcome problems facing it. He noted that Austrian experts have conducted talks with Jordanian counterparts on means to enhance Jordanian-Austrian ties. He stressed that Jordan's future would be promising when European investments start to flow in and when tourism grows. Dr. Klestil said his country would actively contribute to the peace process through its participation in the multilateral talks on water, energy and economic development. The president expressed his country's sympathy with Jordan in its stand on the siege of the port of Aqaba. He said he was impressed with Jordan's touristic and archaeological attractions, adding that he felt he was in a "beautiful holy land" as soon as he landed in Amman. Dr. Klestil began a three-day state visit to Jordan on Monday. He held a round of talks with King Hussein shortly after arrival. The Austrian president visits the ancient Nabatean city of Petra today.

Israel upbeat on economic 'accord'

PARIS (R) — Israeli Finance Minister Abraham Shohat said on Tuesday he had reached agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on most areas of economic relations between Israel and the future self-governing Palestinian areas except for trade and labour. Both sides said in a joint statement on Monday they expected to conclude an economic agreement in Paris next week as part of a wider accord on self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, being negotiated in Cairo.

Speaking to Israeli reporters before flying to Tel Aviv for a two-day national holiday, Mr. Shohat said the two delegations had finalised agreement on agriculture, industry and energy.

They were close to agreement on direct and indirect taxation and financial affairs "except for the currency," he said.

The PLO wanted a "symbolic currency" but Israel remained opposed, for the moment, to a separate currency in the five-year interim period of self-rule while seeking clarification of what exactly the Palestinians sought.

Israeli officials have hinted they could live with a "Luxembourg-style" currency that was in practice the Jordanian dinar denominated in Palestinian banknotes and coins.

Palestinian delegation chief Ahmad Qouria said last week the issue was being handled constructively.

The outstanding problem on indirect taxation was the rate of value added tax (VAT) to be levied in the Palestinian territories, Mr. Shohat said. Israel has a 17 per cent rate while the Palestinians wanted to set a 15 per cent level.

He said both sides agreed on the principle of open economic relations but considerable work remained to be done on import and export duties, labour, tourism and insurance.

Fighting rages around Gorazde; Russians seeth

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Agencies) — Muslims defending Gorazde apparently fired upon Bosnian Serb positions around the city Tuesday, Russian President Boris Yeltsin warned that more strikes could heighten the conflict in the former Yugoslav republic. Bosnian government radio said Gorazde, a government-held town of 65,000 people, was under heavy shelling Tuesday. But Lieutenant-General Michael Rose, the U.N. military commander in Bosnia, said it appeared the town's Muslim defenders were firing at Serb positions.

Although Gen. Rose refused to characterize the situation, it seemed government troops were trying to provoke a Serb response in hopes of bringing more NATO air raids.

The Serbs accused Muslims of launching a new infantry offensive and warned they would crush it unless it stopped. Peter Kessler, a U.N. spokesman, said Bosnian Serb heavy machine guns were aimed at the city.

"The only people firing in Gorazde now are the Bosnian army, firing out of town with their mortars at the Bosnian Serbs who are not firing at all. We are trying to stop them from doing it," Gen. Rose, head of U.N. forces in Bosnia, told Reuters.

But other U.N. military officials said it was not clear if Muslim forces were firing out of the town itself. They said Muslim forces had come under fire by Serb troops on confrontation lines on the edge of town.

Serbs have advanced steadily in a two-week assault on Gorazde that has killed 156 and wounded 646 in the Muslim enclave in eastern Bosnia.

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(Continued on page 5)

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Serbs threaten to hit NATO

BOSNIAN Serb leaders, anticipating further North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) air strikes, warned on Tuesday that their forces will shoot down allied planes if threatened again. "The supreme command has given orders to soldiers that every plane that flies at them should be downed," Bosnian Serb army commander General Ratko Mladic told his troops during a tour of a front line near the Muslim town of Gorazde.

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"We have not signed any ceasefire agreement and we don't intend to," said Christine Omutoi and Bosco Butera, members of the rebel group's political bureau in Kampala, Uganda.

They said they did not recognise a provisional government appointed Friday.

The interim government was reported Tuesday to have fled a hotel where it had been

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Iraq to press case for unfreezing of its assets

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Iraqi parliamentarians headed for France on Tuesday to attend a session of the European Parliament where they are expected to make a strong pitch for the release of frozen Iraqi assets and an end to the 45-month-old international sanctions against their country.

Abdul Karim Abbas and Bashir Kadem, members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Iraqi Parliament, are expected to present a summary of the impact of the sanctions against their country and argue that Baghdad has satisfactorily met with all demands of the United Nations Security Council diplomats said.

One of the immediate Iraqi requests to be made formally and informally at the Strasbourg meetings is expected to be for an unfreezing of Iraqi assets that remain frozen in some of the European countries.

The assets were frozen in line with a United Nations Security Council resolution adopted immediately after the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The resolution imposed a sweeping, all-encompassing trade embargo against Iraq and ordered a freeze of all Iraqi assets abroad.

A resolution adopted after the end of the Gulf war which evicted the Iraqis from Kuwait in February 1991 left it to individual governments to decide whether to freeze or unfreeze the assets. But only a handful of governments have actually released the funds to the Iraqis.

At the outset of the Gulf crisis, Iraqi assets frozen abroad were estimated to be worth around \$4 billion. Since then, some of the governments

have publicly released the funds while others have clandestinely entered agreements with the Iraqi government. Under the agreements, some of the governments agreed that part of the frozen assets be used to pay for Iraqi imports from their countries and part be used as collateral to guarantee Iraqi letters of credit.

In the maze of a confusing array of arrangements that the Iraqi government has entered into with many sympathetic Western and Third World governments, the actual amount that remains in the frozen accounts is not known.

"I don't think many senior Iraqi officials themselves know what is left and what has been appropriated in their inter-bank arrangements and agreements," said a source closely familiar with Iraqi moves in the international market.

The two Iraqi members of Parliament are expected to issue a public appeal for the release of frozen Iraqi assets in the member countries of the European Union (EU) as well as for EU support for Baghdad's call for an end to the international sanctions.

A diplomat said Iraq "will have a listening audience particularly from among French members of the European Parliament." The diplomat noted that France has stood out among the five permanent members of the Security Council to argue that Iraq deserved an easing of the crippling sanctions.

At least two French oil companies, Total and Elf-Aquitaine, have signed agreements with the Iraqi government to start oil exploration and production in Iraq as soon as the embargo is lifted.

Socialist and leftist members sympathetic to Iraq represent nearly half of the European

Parliament, elected from the 12 members of the EU. As such, the forum would serve as a morale booster for Iraq, which has been waging an international campaign for an end to the sanctions.

The United States and Britain are the two staunch proponents of continued sanctions against Iraq, fighting every move to ease the embargo, which has deprived Iraq of vital oil revenues to pay for the needs of its 18 million people.

Food and medicine are exempt from the sanctions, but Baghdad says that its pre-crisis foreign exchange reserves have run out and has no funds to pay for imports.

The European Parliament is more of a ceremonial forum and its decisions and resolutions are not binding on individual governments of the EU. "But they would make a strong moral impact in their respective countries," said the European diplomat.

Meanwhile, an Italian business delegation is expected here Wednesday after a visit to Baghdad.

Diplomatic sources said Iraqi officials who met with the delegation raised the issue of unfreezing Iraqi assets held in Italian banks. Some of the banks have already entered unpublicised arrangements with the Iraqi government, but others are believed to be holding back.

The delegation includes businessmen and officials of the Arab-Italian Chamber of Commerce, but the team's trip to Baghdad was not arranged or organised by the Italian governments, the Italian embassy in Amman said.

During their stay in Amman, the delegation members will hold talks with their Jordanian counterparts on issues related to Jordanian-Italian trade.



BOMBING VICTIMS: Two bombing victims by jets of Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum in Kabul; the wounded man was hauled into the backseat of a commandeered taxi while the dead man went into the boot. Sixteen people were killed and nearly 150 wounded in the bombing raid and artillery fire on Monday (AFP photo)

Cairo shifts policy on Assiyut militants

ASSIYUT, Egypt (R) — Cairo has decreed a more subtle approach to militancy in the southern province of Assiyut and 23 members of Muslim militant organisations have surrendered in the first week of the change, a local leader said.

Mohammad Abdul Mohsen, the head of the Assiyut branch of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), told reporters that police were keeping a promise to "turn over a new leaf" by treating suspects properly and in accordance with the law.

"Police have responded well," Mr. Abdul Mohsen said. "We are continuing because we feel that we have had positive results in this short period and that the wave of violence in the province can be contained within a few months."

Assiyut has been the main theatre for the long conflict between the security forces and the militant Gamaa Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group), which says it is fighting to overthrow the government and set up a strict Islamic state.

For the first three months of the year, the Gamaa was killing several policemen a week and the security forces fought back by rounding up hundreds of suspects a day at random, alienating the population and exasperating Assiyut politicians.

Mr. Abdul Mohsen said: "The political leadership in Cairo gave instructions on April 2 that assessing the situation in Assiyut should be the responsibility of the governor and the NDP."

The decision in effect pushes to the sidelines the security forces, who are mostly strangers to the region.

The local politicians are now calling the shots and, after a long period of inactivity, they have gone out of their way to win over the families of militants.

"The basic idea is that leaders get in touch with family elders in the villages and urge them to put pressure on their sons who are involved with the Gamaa so that they head themselves over to the security agencies," he said.

"We have to be able to convince them that this is in their interest and that they will be treated well and in accordance with the law," he added.

Mr. Abdul Mohsen said that on the first day of the new policy families insisted that he accompany them and their sons to the security headquarters as guarantor of their safety.

"At first sight some of these young guys looked like they had just come down from the mountains. They had thick beards and they were in a poor psychological state," he said.

"We hand them in and then they are released. They go back (to the police) the next day completely changed after they feel that they are free... and ordinary citizens," he added.

"We had to reach out to them and convince them that the state encourages piety but that we must extract the violence from the religious movement," he said.

The politician said the police set free some militants but they could not unilaterally drop charges against others.

"The families realise this... they don't ask more than that their sons be treated properly and legally," he added.

The Gamaa said Monday it was responsible for killing a plainclothes policeman shot dead in Assiyut on Sunday morning.

It said in a statement: "The operation was the fourth act of revenge against state security executives, in retaliation for the acts of repression and humiliation which state security and prison officers carry out against Islamist prisoners."

The Gamaa would continue to attack state security personnel, banks and the tourist industry "until God grants us victory against the repressive secular regime" of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, it added.

Three men with pistols shot dead the policeman in the southern town of Al Qusiya as he was on his way to work.

The other "acts of revenge" were an attack on prison officers near Cairo in March, a bomb outside a Cairo bank and the assassination of a police general in Cairo on Saturday.

On Monday parliament extended emergency law for three years after the overwhelming majority of members accepted the government's argument that it needed the law as a weapon against political violence.

Emergency law, which gives the security forces broad powers of arrest and detention, has been in force since militants assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

Twelve of the 458 members voted against the extension on the grounds either that it was unnecessary or that the government used the law against its non-violent opponents.

Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Middle East Watch say the government has used emergency law to detain thousands of people, many for political reasons.

Interior Minister Hassan Al Ali, arguing the case for extending it, said that 765 people had been killed or wounded in political violence by militants in recent years.

Algeria gets moderate premier

TUNIS (R) — Algerian President Liamine Zeroual, desperately trying to end a bloody feud with Islamic militants, has replaced hardline Prime Minister Redha Malek with a moderate.

A brief despatch carried by the national news agency APS gave no immediate explanation for Mr. Malek's resignation a day after Algeria's army-backed rulers devalued their currency, the dinar, by 28.6 per cent as part of a debt relief deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"The president accepted this resignation and took the opportunity to praise the efforts made by Mr. Redha Malek and the other members of the government, which he led with dedication and self-denial," the agency said.

Mr. Zeroual appointed Mokdad Sifi, equipment minister in the outgoing government, to succeed him, APS reported.

Mr. Malek had consistently advocated a hard line against Muslim fundamentalists fighting to establish an Islamic state in Algeria and opposed to dialogue with the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

Mr. Zeroual has called for dialogue with all political forces while Mr. Sifi has a reputation as a moderate who will strongly back Mr. Zeroual's policies.

"Decision-making has been centralised and the political policies of (Lamine) Zeroual can be put into effect rapidly," one diplomat said. Mr. Malek was appointed prime minister of the army-backed government only last August, but he took a strongly independent line regarding dialogue with the fundamentalists.

"By eliminating Redha Malek, Liamine Zeroual has nipped in the bud a potential division in the lines of authority," said another political analyst contacted in Algeria by telephone.

Other analysts said Mr. Malek was behind the publication of a newspaper article which said the high command of the army was opposed to Mr. Zeroual's policy of trying to make peace with the militants.

At least 3,300 people have been killed since the authorities scrapped multi-party elections in early 1992, which the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front was poised to win.

Mr. Sifi, 53, who was one of the few holdover ministers to remain when Mr. Malek formed his government in September, is said to favour gradual reforms to modernise Algeria's economy and society.

Pope's decision hurts Lebanon's image

BEIRUT (R) — Pope John Paul's postponement of his trip to Lebanon is a blow to the country's image and a setback to the government's efforts to regain international confidence.

The Vatican said on Monday that "grave and unpredictable events" had made conditions unsuitable for the visit.

The decision shocked many of Lebanon's substantial Christian minority, which emerged confused and divided from the 1975-90 civil war and may feel the Pope is abandoning them in a time of trouble.

But other Christians wanted the Pope to stay away, saying the Syrian-backed government has treated them unfairly since the war and his visit would be seen as blessing a situation in which they are discriminated against.

Maronite Christian Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir lashed out at the government at Easter, saying it had neither protected the Christians nor treated them with equality.

Government officials had emphasised for months that the Pope's presence would show the world that the bad old days of sectarian conflict and chronic violence were over and it was time to invest in Lebanon's future.

They put on a brave face on Monday after the Vatican announced the postponement.

"I think this postponement is only temporary and does not change at all the Vatican's interest in the Lebanese issue," Foreign Minister Faris Bouez told reporters.

But Papat Nuncio Pablo Puente said at a news conference the government had wanted the visit to go ahead as planned on May 28.

Mr. Puente said security was the Vatican's main consideration in the wake of a church bombing on Feb. 27 that killed 10 worshippers and injured 59.

But he said Pope John Paul's fears were not for his own safety.

"Naturally the danger was not a personal problem for him because he considers that danger is normal in his ministry as Pope," Mr. Puente told reporters.

"But if there was danger it was that in one of the ceremonies a crazy element could make an attempt against the people," he said.

The government of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri has made security a priority as it tries to rebuild Lebanon, but a Jordanian diplomat was murdered in Beirut in January and foreign envoys still see the dangers of Beirut as real.

U.S. Ambassador Mark Hambley is escorted around town by a private army. His vehicle preceded and followed by jeeps with machine guns mounted on the roof. Other Western diplomats also travel with squads of armed guards.

However, Mr. Puente emphasised that the Pope's visit would go ahead as soon as conditions were ripe and said the pontiff would not make a planned visit to Jerusalem before coming to Lebanon.

"I hope the visit to Lebanon will be made separately, and before any other country in the region," Mr. Puente said.

That was little comfort to Beirut financiers who called the postponement a huge blow to the government, which is trying to attract capital for a \$30 billion reconstruction programme.

"The announcement means that Lebanon is not safe for a papal visit. So how can the government convince investors that it is safe for their capital?" a banker told Reuters.

"This will damage international confidence in the country, its political leadership and its economic prospects," added a foreign exchange dealer.

U.N. calls for Cyprus accord by end of April

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Security Council expressed concern Monday that agreement was not reached by the end of March on measures designed to build confidence between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities and called for an accord before the end of April.

In a letter to Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, Security Council President Colin Keating of New Zealand said members "note that the leader of the Greek Cypriot community is ready to accept the March 21 text of ideas on implementation, provided that the Turkish Cypriot leader, who has voiced numerous objections, does likewise."

"They believe that the next few weeks will provide an important test of the parties' commitment to making progress toward an overall settlement," Mr. Keating said.

The confidence-building measures, intended to help smooth the way for eventually reunifying the island under a federal system, involve reopening Nicosia airport and the resort town of Varosha under U.N. control.

Neither place has been in use since Turkish troops landed in northern Cyprus in 1974 in reaction to a coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece.

Mr. Keating said council

members "regret that insufficient progress has been made to enable agreement to be reached in the timescale envisaged in your report of March 4... this is a matter of concern."

He told the secretary-general that members "endorse your approach and underline the need to conclude an agreement on the implementation of the confidence-building measures on the basis suggested by you before the end of April."

"They look forward to receiving your full report at that time," the letter added.

Dr. Ghali, in a recent report, said Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş "voiced numerous objections" to the package of proposals, saying it contained changes from a version outlined in a July 1, 1993 U.N. document.

The report added that President Glafcos Clerides, leader of the Greek Cypriot community, while not liking many of the changes, said he was prepared to accept the revised text if Mr. Denktaş also did so.

Mr. Clerides later expressed displeasure and disappointment at the secretary-general's report.

The U.N. chief's special representative for Cyprus, former Canadian Foreign Minister Joe Clark, said last week efforts to reach an agreement would continue only for four more weeks.

Lebanese government steps back from confrontation with press

BEIRUT (Agencies) — The Lebanese government backed down from a confrontation with the press, toning down tough punishments it approved only a week ago after a storm of protest from newspapers and parliamentary deputies.

At a late night meeting on Monday, the government also partly lifted a ban on news bulletins on private radio and television stations.

The government of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri backed down after protests from newspapers and parliamentary deputies who denounced the measures as excessive and accused it of trying to abolish Lebanon's prized media freedoms.

"The government backed down and the press won the battle of freedoms," Al Anwar daily newspaper said in a banner headline, reflecting similar comments by other newspapers.

Al Sharq daily hailed the new changes, which must be approved by parliament, saying they "removed the sword that was hanging over journalists' heads."

At Monday's session, the cabinet abolished articles in the press law imposing preventive detention pending trial on journalists suspected of actions endangering Lebanon's foreign relations or provoking sectarian strife.

It cancelled the penalties of suspension against a paper before a court's verdict is issued, or withdrawal of a paper's licence no matter what the



Rafik Al Hariri

breach of the press law was. It lowered fines of up to 500 million Lebanese pounds (about \$300,000) that it introduced for newspapers convicted of such breaches to 200 million pounds (\$118,000).

Parliamentary Deputy Speaker Elie Ferzi met Hariri on Monday and demanded that the government amend the press law or parliament would meet on Thursday to settle the matter.

The government also partly lifted a controversial ban it imposed last month on news-casts by private radio and television stations pending a law regulating the audiovisual media.

It said foreign news issued by stations like CNN, BBC, ITN, Skynews, Superchannel, Antenne 2 and MBC may be rebroadcast by local television after obtaining the

approval of the Ministry of Information.

But a ban on broadcasts of local news by the 50 private television stations and more than 100 radio stations remained in force.

The government had justified the news ban saying some stations were playing "sectarian tunes" — codeword for civil peace after the 1975-90 civil war.

Mr. Ferzi said the deputies also demanded the government prepare a bill on the audiovisual media as soon as possible to show it was serious about going ahead with the measures.

The muzzle on news came hand-in-hand with a ban against the Lebanese Forces, the biggest civil war Christian militia, some of whose members were accused of the Feb. 27 church blast which killed 10 people.

The news ban has raised fears about the survival of Lebanon's press freedoms, which are unmatched in the Arab world.

During Monday's session, the cabinet issued guidelines to a ministerial committee entrusted with drawing up the new audiovisual media law. Al Anwar daily newspaper said the law would allow the private stations to air news bulletins.

But newspapers said some ministers suggested allowing the stations to broadcast news under censorship and to license those run by former militias only after they cut links to them.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Ordy
18:00	N.B.A. sport
19:00	News in French
19:15	Le Journal De L'Histoire
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Too Close for Comfort
21:00	The Best Of Magic
21:30	News in English
22:00	The World Of Thirties
23:00	Foldark

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 28, Aqaba 35. Humidity readings: Amman 13 per cent, Aqaba 18 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:	
Dr. Fakhri Tereh	885880

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Rescue	199
Civil Defence Emergency	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	801228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	894390

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:	
Hussain Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Abdell Maternity, J. Amn	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	643342
Mathas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmiciani	664171/4
Shmiciani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital	667271/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/57

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
09:00	Aqaba (RJ)
09:30	Jeddah (RJ)
09:55	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:30	Aqaba (RJ)
10:30	Rome (RJ)
11:15	
11:35	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00	Berlin, London (RJ)
12:40	Casa Blanca, Tunis (RJ)
12:40	Istanbul (RJ)
20:30	

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman	8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus	5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus	7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman	5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upptower price in fil per kg.	
Apple	550 650
Banana	600
Banana (Mukammal)	620
Cabbage	

International group arrives to study refugee affairs

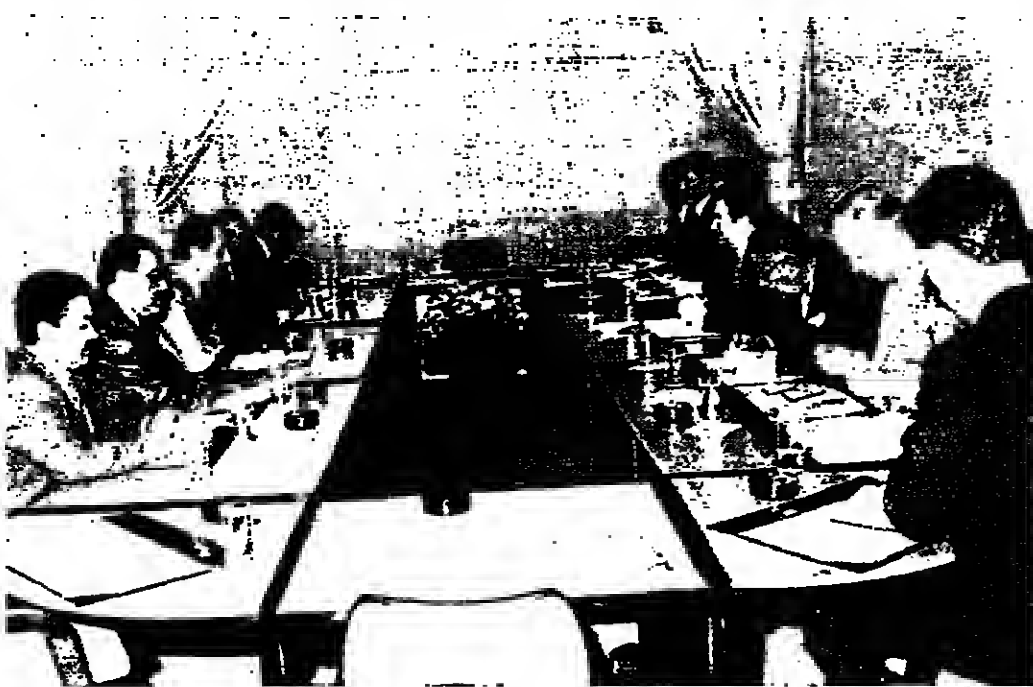
By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A seven-member fact-finding mission led by Marc Perron, assistant deputy foreign minister of Canada, is currently on a visit to Jordan as part of a tour of the region to discuss Palestinian refugees' affairs.

The group, which comprises delegates from Switzerland, Japan and Sweden, had a meeting Tuesday with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan who outlined Jordan's stand vis-a-vis U.N. Security Council resolutions, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

A Canadian embassy official told the Jordan Times that the group was also meeting with Minister of State Adel Irsheid, officials from UN-RWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency), which cares for the refugees, and would tour camps to examine services and facilities and interview residents.

He said that Mr. Perron and his team would listen to the views of the refugees about prospects of the Middle East peace process and how it can benefit them in the future, and



A visiting international fact-finding mission touring the region to review the Palestinian refugee situation Tuesday meets with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan (Petra)

also discuss their requests for improving services at the camps.

Mr. Perron, who heads the working group on refugees in the multilateral phase of the Arab-Israeli peace talks, and his accompanying team could be heading to Lebanon follow-

ing their visit to Jordan, but no formal decision has been taken yet, said the official.

According to Petra, Mr. Al Hassan voiced Jordan's complaints about the continued blockade on Aqaba, and quoted Mr. Perron as expressing his team's understanding of

the extra burdens borne by the Kingdom in this respect.

It said that Mr. Perron underlined the importance for a speedy solution to the refugee problem.

Canada's Ambassador to Jordan Andrew Robinson was present at the meetings.

Arab Potash Company finishes new plant

Annual potash production to go up to 1.6m tonnes

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Arab Potash Company (APC) has completed the construction of a new plant which has a capacity to produce 400,000 tonnes of potash annually and is currently conducting a study on the feasibility of constructing a similar plant near the southern tip of the Dead Sea, according to APC General Manager Suleiman Huwari.

Experiments have already started at the finished plant, which cost \$123 million, and the formal inauguration of the plant has been pushed to June 10, marking the anniversary of the Great Arab Revolt, at a ceremony to be attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, said Mr. Huwari at a press conference

Tuesday.

The new plant is expected to boost the company's production to 1.6 million tonnes of potash this year, rising to 1.8 million in 1995, added Mr. Huwari.

The feasibility study on the proposed southern Dead Sea plant is expected to be completed by June next year, said Mr. Huwari, adding that the construction of the two plants would increase production to 2.2 million tonnes of potash annually.

Referring to the siege on Aqaba, Mr. Huwari said the interception and continued harassment of shipping has led to a decrease in the number of vessels docking at the port

which subsequently led to a sharp hike in freight charges.

The delays in shipping potash, new conditions imposed on the APC by ship owners and the insurance surcharges are among the adverse factors that affect potash marketing, Mr. Huwari said.

Despite the difficulties, he continued, the APC has been paying its debts, bringing them down from \$260 million to less than \$45 million. Mr. Huwari said the debts are payable in easy instalments until the year 2000.

In 1993, the APC sold 1,476,691 tonnes of potash, registering a 20 per cent increase over 1992 figures and earning the company a net profit of JD22.1 million.

according to Mr. Huwari.

He said that earnings from potash, which is marketed in 30 countries, has enabled the company to pay JD18 million to the state treasury.

Some of the earnings are paid out to other shareholders besides the Jordanian government which owns more than 50 per cent of the APC shares.

Other shareholders are Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the Arab Mining Company (AMC), and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

According to Mr. Huwari, APC currently employs 2,000 workers, of whom 70 per cent are citizens living in the southern parts of the Kingdom where the APC is located.

Ministry to ease farmers' dilemma of rising costs

AMMAN (Petra) — In a session which heard reports from several members, Agriculture Minister Mohammad Farhan Tuesday briefed the Cabinet on new measures to make available fertilisers, seeds and pesticides at reasonable prices in response to repeated complaints by farmers over the soaring prices of these materials.

The Ministry also plans to provide the market with low-price farm crates and boxes, the minister said.

He said the new measures, are designed to find means to

support local farmers.

The Cabinet also reviewed the water situation in the Azraq oasis where overpumping has been depleting the basin and dangerously increasing the level of salinity.

Haphazard water pumping at the oasis has also resulted in the drying-up of the natural ponds in that area, according to a Cabinet statement.

It said that the government was taking measures designed to stop the excessive pumping. Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf briefed the

Cabinet on the outcome of her talks in Cairo with Egyptian officials following her attendance of the opening of the Jordanian wing at the Cairo Annual Trade Fair.

She said Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sidki who visited the Jordanian wing has underlined the need for further developing Jordanian-Egyptian economic relations.

Dr. Sidki stressed that the Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee, which is chaired by the prime ministers of both countries was due to hold its

meeting in the last week of April, according to the minister.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan outlined the outcome of his talks with the delegation accompanying the Austrian president during his current visit to Jordan.

He said the Austrian side has expressed a strong interest in promoting cooperation with Jordan and boosting the Kingdom's exports to Austria as well as increasing the number of Austrian tourists to Jordan.

Veterinarians to get allowance hike, call off sit-in

By Elia Nasrallah

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government Tuesday decided to grant state-employed veterinarians a 90 per cent professional allowance as of Sept. 1, 1994 and therefore a five-day strike planned by veterinarians for April 23 has been "called off," according to Ahmad Ajlouni, president of the Jordanian Veterinarians Association (JVA).

"At least 200 veterinarians

gathered at the Professional Association Complex and marched to the Prime Ministry carrying posters earlier in the day to present a memorandum to the government outlining demands for the allowance, only to be told that the Council of Ministers has already approved the demands and that the government-employed veterinarians would get a 90 per cent allowance, up from the present 60 per cent," Dr. Ajlouni told the Jordan

Times.

Deputy Prime Minister Maan Abu Nowar met a 10-member committee representing the protesters and notified them of the government's decision, noting that the payment of the 90 per cent allowance would take effect as of the beginning of September, said the JVA president.

"The JVA has been struggling to secure the 90 per cent allowance since 1992, but its efforts have gone in vain until

today," added Dr. Ajlouni.

According to Dr. Ajlouni, meat merchants repeatedly telephoned him urging the veterinarians to call off the action because nearly JD 3.5 million worth of fresh meat was arriving at warehouses Tuesday and could not be distributed without veterinary approval.

"The same merchants along with quite a good number of poultry farmers sent urgent cables to the government Tuesday, he said.

Cardiac society to start international meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — Medical specialists representing Arab and foreign nations are gathering at the Royal Cultural Centre Wednesday for a three-day meeting organised by the Jordan Cardiac Society (JCS) and to be held under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein.

Society President Yousef Goussous Tuesday said 55 working papers will be reviewed by the delegates including 12 by specialists employed at the King Hussein Medical Centre.

U.S. specialists will submit 20 papers, European delegates 17 and other Arab and foreign countries 16 papers, he added.

These papers range in topics from discussions of diagnoses and anaesthetic procedures to various types of cardiac surgery,

according to Dr. Goussous who is also director of the Royal Medical Services.

Muayyad Al Nasser, who heads the conference's preparatory committee, said that 150 participants out of 300 will come from Arab states as well as Iran, the U.S., the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Germany.

Noting that the first open

heart surgery conducted in Jordan was done in 1955, Dr. Nasser said that currently about 1,500 such operations are conducted annually in the Kingdom. He added that the first successful heart transplant in Jordan was done in 1973.

Established in 1988, the Jordan Cardiac Society currently has 82 members.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince visits army battalion

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Prince Rashid Tuesday visited the Prince Rashid Battalion where they were received by its commander and senior officers. Prince Hassan, who was briefed on the battalion's activities and duties, watched military exercises performed by the battalion's units and visited an exhibition of weapons organised by the battalion. Prince Rashid distributed trophies and awards to winners of competitions held as part of the exercises. At the end of the visit, Prince Hassan and Prince Rashid were presented with token gifts from the battalion's commander.

Princess Haya opens education centre

AQABA (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein Tuesday opened a special education centre here. The centre, named after Princess Haya, will provide educational services, speech and hearing training to 30 handicapped children. Addressing the opening ceremony, Aqaba Acting District Governor Tayseer Al Dmour praised Princess Haya's efforts to alleviate the suffering of the underprivileged who need special care and attention. Princess Haya toured the various sections of the centre.

Turkish official visits Lower House

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Tahir Masihi Tuesday reviewed with visiting Under-Secretary of Turkish Foreign Ministry Ozdem Sanberk the latest developments in the Arab-Israeli peace process and the water situation in the region, in addition to bilateral relations and issues of common concern. The meeting was attended by House First Deputy Speaker Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat and the House Foreign Affairs Committee Rapporteur Saleh Irsheidat. Later, Mr. Sanberk and the accompanying delegation visited Jerash where they toured the archaeological sites and were briefed on the history of this ancient Roman city.

Women's group to hold conference

AMMAN (Petra) — The Business and Professional Women's Club holds its third conference on April 25 at the Amra Hotel, in cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. Participants to the two-day meeting will discuss six working papers by Jordanian intellectuals and

politicians. The papers cover such topics as women and political life, democracy and politics, skills of political management, and the family in the Arab and Islamic cultures, in addition to the Personal Status Law.

Authorities confiscate 200 tonnes of contaminated dates

AMMAN (Petra) — The Health Ministry has confiscated 200 tonnes of dates from a food processing factory in Al Qastal area in Amman after the fruits were found to be contaminated, said Amman health Department Director Fares Khouri Tuesday said. Dr. Khouri said the ministry is currently making the necessary arrangements to destroy the dates. He added that the factory used to package after adding some substance to them to make them appear acceptable to consumers. The factory's owner, he said, was apprehended by police on orders from the Amman governor.

Business group publishes book on dialogue

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Department of Researches & Studies of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) has issued a new book titled "Quests of Jordan." This is the first book in a series under the same title the JBA plans to issue. This series contains the full text of the meetings held between the JBA and some of the Kingdom's foreign visitors, and the dialogues between Jordanian businessmen and these guests. The first book contains the dialogue which Premier of the Province of Ontario Bob Rae, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ronald Brown and Deputy Premier and Minister of Commerce and Trade of Western Australia Henry Cowan.

DEF financed 1,435 projects

KARAK (Petra) — The Development and Employment Fund (DEF) financed 1,435 projects at a cost of JD 8.4 million over the last two years to help support family income and provide job opportunities for Jordanians, according to DEF Director General Mohammad Semadi. He noted that the figure includes JD 7.2 million for 1,400 individual projects. Dr. Semadi said the fund had changed its loan policy to cover individual projects following a survey of unemployment figures in the Kingdom. The survey found that 73,000 graduates were unemployed and were seeking jobs with the Civil Service Commission (CSC). At a meeting with representatives of the various production sectors in Karak, Dr. Semadi said the DEF had signed two agreements with the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) and Queen Alia Fund for Social Development.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

THE FIRST QUARTET FESTIVAL

★ "Edinburgh Quartet" at the main theatre of the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

DRAMA

★ Comedy entitled "A Touch Of Spring" (to be preceded by a cocktail and dinner party) at the Hotel Inter-Continental at 7:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Electronics and electric exhibition at the World Centre for Exhibitions, University Road (10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.) (Tel. 602689).

★ Paintings exhibition by Jordanian and Lebanese artists Jamal Khamis and Jehad Abu Suleiman at Alla Art Gallery (9:30 - 13:30, 15:00-18:00) (Tel. 639303).

★ Graphics exhibition by artist Burhan Saleh Mohammad at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture (Tel. 695291).

★ Book exhibition at the International Exhibition Centre, University Road.

★ Engraving exhibition by artist Jean-Pierre Pincemin at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition entitled "Modern and Old Ceramics and Glass" by artists Hamed Rashed and Iman Khalifeh at Goethe-Institut.

★ Exhibition by German artist Allona at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Photo exhibition entitled "Spring Breezes From Jordan" by Dr. Zuhair Mohsen at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 669348).

★ Exhibition by Egyptian artist Shalabiya Ibrahim at Saladna Art Gallery (Tel. 678589).

★ Exhibition of spring paintings by Dr. Ali Al Ghoul at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 326932).

★ "Spring Exhibition 1994" at the Jordan Plastic Art Association Gallery (Tel. 699914).

★ Exhibition by artist Perween Al Sarraf at Aba'ad Art Gallery (10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 819661).

★ Flower exhibition entitled "The Flower Bridge Between Jordan and Palestine" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman (10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.) (Tel. 679166).

★ Art exhibition by artist Ahmed Nawar at Balka Art Gallery in Fuheis (daily from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 720902).

★ Jordanian-Iraqi contemporary exhibition by over 80 artists at Ain Art Gallery in Wadi Sagra (9:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 644451).

★ Exhibition of sculptures and drawings by Jordanian sculptor Samer Tabbaa. Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh (Tel. 643251/2).

Yemeni delegation ends visit saying mediation should continue

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An Yemeni delegation headed by Saleh Salih Mohammad, member of the presidential council and deputy leader of the Southern Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) Tuesday left Amman after a two-day visit during which they were received by His Majesty King Hussein.

The delegation is on a tour of Arab countries to explain the viewpoints of Southern Yemenis over the political crisis in their country.

Conservative North Yemen and Marxist South Yemen merged in May 1990 to produce a united Yemen. The country held its first general elections in April last year, widely hailed as the launching of a sweeping democratisation process.

But differences between the former leaders of the South and North developed, leading into today's crisis.

King Hussein told the delegation that a solution to the crisis lies in the reconciliation agreement that the Yemeni leaders signed in Amman on Feb. 20.

Mr. Mohammad told reporters that a high-level Jordanian delegation was expected to visit Yemen soon to follow-up on the implementation of the Amman accord.

The agreement, signed by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, a northerner, and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh, who is from the south, set out a series of political, military and economic reforms to end the crisis.

But the ink had not dried on the document when southern and northern army units clashed, undermining the implementation of the agreement.

More than 20 people were reportedly killed in the

clashes, which were ended after intense Jordanian-Omani mediation.

Since then, Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh have met once, in Salalah under Omani mediation, but the encounter produced little breakthrough. However, senior military officers from the South and North met in the Beidh stronghold of Aden on Monday in their first meeting since the crisis erupted in April.

Mr. Mohammad told reporters in Amman that his YSP was seeking the help of all Arab countries and leaders to end the crisis and that it wanted Jordan and Oman to continue their mediation.

Oman said after the disappointing Salalah meeting that it planned to abandon the mediation after consultations with Jordan. Oman and Jordan are members of a military commission along with Yemeni officers entrusted with merging the southern and northern Yemeni armies, which, despite the 1990 merger, remain under separate commands.

In his comments while in Amman, Mr. Mohammad rejected charges levelled by President Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) that the southerners were receiving arms from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to wage a secessionist war.

Mr. Mohammad, who has visited Saudi Arabia several times in the wake of the crisis, said the visits were aimed at seeking Saudi financial assistance for housing, schools, and other development projects in South Yemen.

The alleged Gulf support for southern Yemenis was perceived to have been extended because of concerns that the democratic process launched in united Yemen was not ominous for other countries in the Arabian

Peninsula.

The Gulf states were also reportedly unhappy with the high-profile role that Jordan played in getting President Saleh and Mr. Beidh to sign the Amman reconciliation agreement and the Kingdom's follow-up efforts to implement the accord.

Mr. Mohammad also accused President Saleh's government of failing to adopt measures as stipulated in the agreement and asserted that the government was behind the continuing threat to Yemeni unity.

He accused northern army units of violating the agreement by killing YSP supporters and pointed out that no action has been taken to prosecute those who took the South accuses of having waged an annihilation campaign against southern activists.

Vice President Beidh says that more than 150 people were killed by nonherms after the political crisis erupted in August 1993 when he stormed out of Sanaa and went to Aden, where he has remained since then, refusing to assume formal office as vice president until Mr. Saleh implemented reforms.

The delegation headed by Mr. Mohammad included YSP politburo member Abdul Aziz Al Dali and several other leading members of the southern Yemeni party. The delegation's immediate destination after leaving Jordan was not immediately known.

Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have also launched a mediation effort, details of which have not been published yet.

Envoys from the two countries met with President Saleh in Sanaa, the federal capital, and Mr. Beidh in Aden last week and reported to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Monday.

Jordan Times

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Guarding against disaster

TODAY MARKS another missed opportunity to put into effect last September's much celebrated Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel accord on interim Palestinian self-rule on the basis of the Gaza-Jericho First formula. Last Dec. 13 was the original date agreed upon between the two sides for beginning the implementation of their deal but that deadline was missed. With the April 13 date also gone as the deadline for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, there is now a sense of resignation among the Palestinians and Arabs that even later dates would also become additional casualties of Israeli deliberate footdragging. "If Mr. Peres says he is willing to respect the new target date, the date at the end of the month," commented PLO chief negotiator Nabil Shaath in Cairo Monday, "it would be fine with us."

Of course, there is no proof that even this third deadline would be met by Israel. No wonder His Majesty King Hussein was anything but upbeat about the prospects for peace in the area when at a joint press conference with visiting Austrian President Thomas Klestil Monday he interpreted the ongoing stalemate in the Arab-Israeli peace talks on all fronts as a "crucial crisis" that is threatening the whole region with an "abyss of despair and disaster."

With this sense of despair growing by the day, the ground is becoming fertile for the extremists to act on. But if their plans are to be frustrated, only a new international effort can stem the tide of negativism and desperation. The U.S. in particular would have to shoulder the greatest responsibility in spearheading this effort. Washington should be expected to do much more than it has been doing to push the stagnant parleys into the right direction. After all, the U.S. has many effective cards that it can still play in that vein.

But to pin all hopes on the Clinton administration to come to the rescue of the peace process in the Middle East could be too optimistic. Greater Arab efforts must be exerted to make our negotiating tactics and strategy more effective and coordinated. Lack of cohesion in Arab ranks could be the single most important reason why the Rabin government has been able to play one Arab card against the other. By sticking together, therefore, the Arab World would make the chances of striking equitable and honourable peace that much stronger, and the consequences of failure less damaging.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AMONG THE European countries Austria was one of the foremost to show interest in the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East as it backed all efforts towards achieving that goal, said Al Ra'i daily Tuesday. In view of its vast ties with the Arab World, in general, and Jordan in particular, Austria has been showing interest in a lasting peace through the implementation of U.N. resolutions and has backed the Middle East peace process as a way for the fulfilment of this objective, said the daily. Referring to the Austrian president's visit to Jordan, the paper said that it crowns a long history of excellent relations between the two countries, which have mutual concerns and which seek the attainment of the same objectives.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily, Hosni Ayesh, said Tuesday that women, engineers, lawyers, youths, pharmacists and doctors have unions in each and every Arab state, maintaining close links with their opposite numbers in different Arab countries by continuous meetings, conferences and also through bilateral agreements and other functions. But, the writer said, none of these have yet thought seriously about contributing to the creation of Arab unity. In the 19th century, customs departments in the then German states were instrumental in paving the ground for their states' merger into the present day German nation through their interactions and inter links and close cooperation, said the writer. If it is not possible for all the Arab countries to forge a union at the moment, he said, the least that could happen is small unions among neighbouring Arab countries which, the writer said, are in most need of close cooperation in the face of the challenges and are most in need of unity based on democracy.

'Culture and values from an Arab-Islamic perspective'

By Mahmoud El Sherif

ONE OF the important causes for the present tension between the Arab and Muslim Nations and the West, (the word "West" refers particularly to West European countries and the United States); a tension that has reached alarming levels recently, is the cultural contradictions between the two sides, and what many Muslims see as a corruptive and undermining influence of Western values to Arab and Muslim peoples. For many Westerners, on the other hand, Islam is an enigmatic, even dangerous religion, and the Arabs a backward race that is incorrigibly hostile to Western interests and civilisation. It may not be fair to blame the average European or American for this misunderstanding of the Arabs and Islam. He has been brought up in a self-centred cultural climate which either simply ignores other cultures, or takes a hostile stand against them, as in the case of Islam and the Arabs.

I do not know of any religion or culture, deliberately distorted or unjustly treated by Western historians and writers more than Islam and the culture of the Arabs. With the exception of a few writers in recent times, the bulk of Western literature about Arabs and Islam has been grossly negative and hostile. To give a more contemporary example used in the New Webster's Dictionary, an "Arab" constitutes "a wanderer, an outcast; a child of the street."

The negative image of Islam and Muslims has been formed in the Western subconscious by the sad memories of the Crusade campaigns and by the Arab and Ottoman invasions of Spain and the Balkans in the 14th and 15th centuries.

The negative portrayal of Islam in classics like Dante's "Divine Comedy" of the 17th century and John Milton's "Paradise Lost" of the 18th century has further intensified this image. Even a liberal thinker like Voltaire wrote a book about "The Intolerance of Muhammad" which was full of scornful attacks on the Prophet of Islam.

These are just a few examples of how the Western mind has been nurtured to look down on Islam and Muslims. Unfortunately, this attitude has been further reinforced by

the mass media. Recent newspaper articles, cartoons, films and television series have tended to depict Muslims as a savage and bloodthirsty people. They are portrayed either as bearded "mad mullahs" shooting innocent people in the streets or fat, voluptuous oil "sheikhs" sitting in their tents surrounded by their half-clad concubines.

This strange mixture of ignorance, prejudice and fear has even clouded the vision of some eminent and respected academicians, who sounded the alarm recently, warning against an imminent tidal wave of "Islamic hysteria" which would engulf the globe and threaten Western civilisation.

If we agree that the values cherished by any nation are the principal components of its culture, then it may be difficult to draw a sharp line between "Arab" and "Islamic" values. Islam and its value system were the "mould" in which the Arab culture was formed. Of course, Islam assimilated within its value system many Arab traditions and values which preceded its birth in Arabia. These values, once incorporated, assumed the sanctity and the obligatory nature which Islam confers on all its values. It was Islam which gave the Arabs their place in history and shaped, to a considerable extent, their reflexes, mode of behaviour and their reactions towards events and towards other nations and cultures.

This is why, if one wants to understand Arab culture and Islamic values and how they interact, one has to start by acquainting oneself with Islam, its history and its value system. Islam is one of the three major monotheistic religions besides Christianity and Judaism. In fact, it is not a "unique" or a "new" religion but a link in the chain of prophetic missions which include Abraham, Moses and Jesus Christ. Mohammad repeatedly declared that he was simply completing the messages of the prophets who preceded him. That is why many values respected by Christians and Jews are also respected by Muslims. But, although there is a vast area of agreement between Islam, Christianity and Judaism, this does not mean that the three religions are identical. The central pillar on which the whole edifice of Islam stands is the absolute oneness

and "singularity" of the Almighty. He is the one, omnipresent and omnipotent God. He stands outside creation, because he is the Creator of the universe. Every human being will stand before him alone, on the Day of Judgement, to be either rewarded or punished for his righteous or evil deeds in life.

The word "Islam" means complete existential surrender to God. Therefore, a true Muslim is expected to organise all the impulses of his being on one axis, which is God. Mohammad claimed no divinity for himself. He kept reminding his followers that he was only a messenger, a transmitter of the words of God to mankind. Accordingly, it is blasphemous to think that Mohammad is the "founder of Islam" or the "author of the Koran". God himself is the "author" of the Koran. It is the very word of the Almighty transmitted through the prophet. In fact, there are verses in the Koran which

centure Mohammad for certain human lapses that he committed and could not but publicise. God warned him against concealing or changing one word in the divine revelations delivered to him. This is why Muslims believe the Koran to be purely divine. And, for those who appreciate the subtle grace of the Arabic language, the Koran embodies the supreme beauty of this language. Since it was rendered by an illiterate, the statement that "it is God's words" was readily accepted by his followers and Muslims alike throughout the ages. It is precisely because of this unshakable belief in the divinity of the Koran that its injunctions and its value system have such a powerful sway on the majority of Muslims everywhere.

Another important aspect of Islam is that it is not only a religion confining itself to matters of faith and private life of man, but a "canon" which caters for all fields of human existence, be it individual, social, material, economic, political, legal, cultural, national and international. "It is a culture and a civilisation. It is a polity and a method of government. It prescribes rules for marriage, inheritance, divorce, dress, etiquette, food and personal hygiene. It is a spiritual and human totality". Consequently, religion and politics

are inseparable and they form the two sides of the same coin of Islam. The division of human personality into separate "political" and "religious" spheres is alien to Islam's vision of the human being. A true Muslim is a whole undivided being regardless of his profession or occupation. This explains the recurrent appearances in the history of Islam of groups and movements trying to recreate this "wholeness" by structuring the social, economic and political life of Muslim communities according to what they perceive as the true Islamic model. Also it explains why "Islamic revivalism", which represents a yearning to fulfil this dream, will always be around.

Since God is an axial force in the lives of the majority of Muslims, Islam has remained a dynamic and vigorous religion. If some in the "West" have relegated religion to the churches, the majority of Muslims still consider Islam the most influential determinant in their lives.

But when I talk about the centrality of God in Muslim life, I do not mean that this fact applies to all Muslims today. Muslim values have been on the defensive for centuries. Since the decline of the Muslim Empire in the 15th century and the subsequent abolition of the Islamic Khalifate in 1924, the upsurge of "Westernisation" of Muslim countries has been substantial and the predominance of "Western civilisation" and culture in the 19th and 20th centuries has deeply influenced the Islamic World in many ways.

It was only natural that because of these developments, Western values would gradually take foothold in Muslim societies. This has caused divisions and "the crisis of identity" which we see today in many Muslim countries. The effect was most evident among the majority of urban elites which have adopted Western styles, modes of behaviour and values. But in the rural areas most people have rejected Western values and adhered strictly to what they consider "the Islamic way of life."

In almost every Muslim country, one notices this split between the "secularists", who are composed of most of the ruling elites, the rich and the intellectuals and for whom religion is a bundle of antiquated

folkloric superstitions and the "traditionalists" who live mainly in the rural areas and to whom God and religion are as real as the sun and the stars. There is a state of mutual disrespect, to say the least, between the two sides. These sentiments provide the fertile ground for the growth of Islamic militancy in some Muslim countries.

Islamic values of tolerance and compassion reigned during the ascendancy of Muslim power and culture which has lasted for 700 years and covered a large area of the old world extending from the Himalayas to the Pyrenees. This commonwealth of nations bound by a common faith comprised a multitude of races, sub-cultures and religions, but they all lived together with their cultures flourishing side by side, in harmony and peace. This is mainly due to Islamic tolerance and freedom of faith stressed clearly in the Koranic verse, "There shall be no compulsion in matters of religion." Whereas a good Muslim is expected to propagate the faith peacefully, he is prohibited from trying to impose by force on others, for individual accountability in Islam depends on free will and free choice. There is no freedom there is no responsibility. Thus, compulsory conversion is futile and, therefore, forbidden.

Islam prohibits discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities regarding their basic civil rights. The Koran declares that the followers of all religions can partake of God's grace for their good deeds if they genuinely believe in him. It did not give Muslims the exclusive monopoly of the "kingdom of Heaven". The Koran says, "...verily, those of you who believe, as well as those who follow the Jewish faith, and the Sabians, (a monotheistic religion which stands halfway between Judaism and Christianity) and the Christians, all who believe in God and the Day of Judgement and do righteous deeds, shall have no fear and neither shall they grieve."

Though the Koran called upon the Christians and the Jews to accept the mission of Mohammad, it did not make that a condition for them to enjoy God's grace if they adhered strictly to the spirit

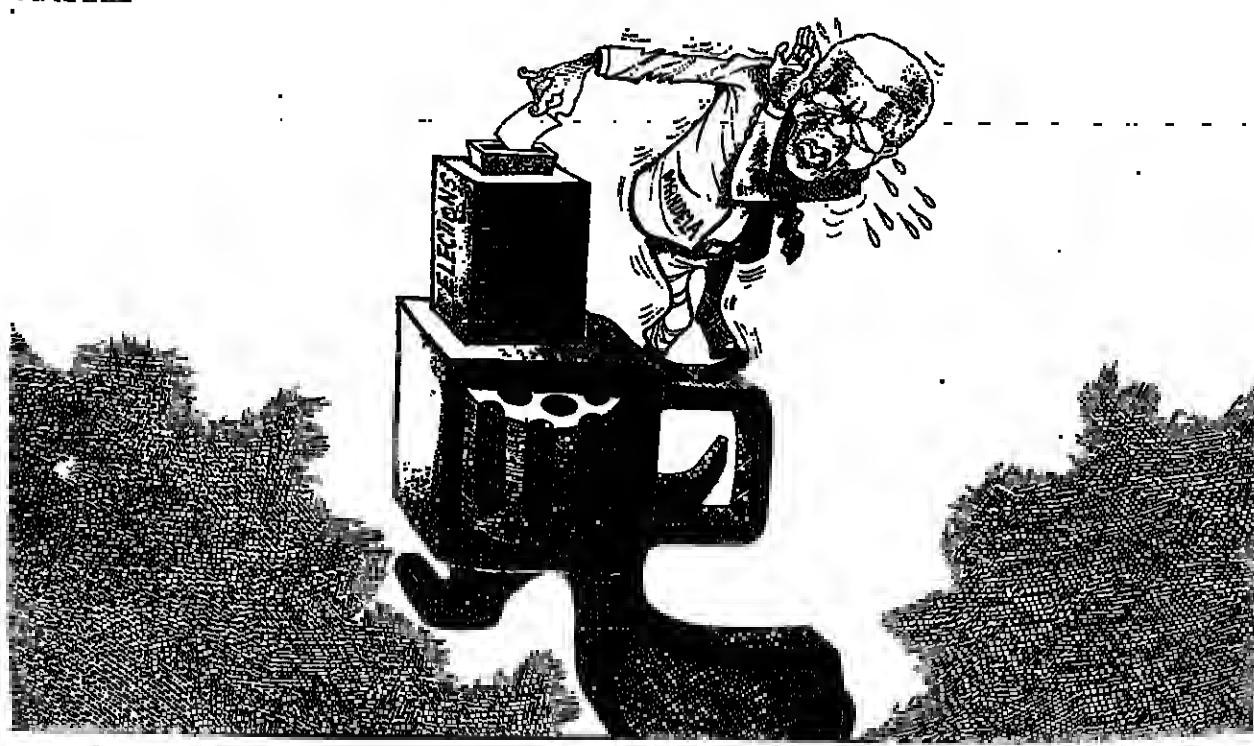
and text of their own scripture. The Koran says, "...if the followers of the Bible would but attain true faith we would indeed efface their previous wrong deeds and bring them into Gardens of Bliss." If they would but truly observe the Torah and the Gospel they would indeed partake of all the blessings of Heaven and Earth." In another verse, it appeals to them to live in conformity with their holy books. "Say oh, followers of the Bible, you have no valid ground for your beliefs unless you truly observe the Torah and the Gospel."

Islam's reverence of Christianity and Judaism was rendered into a tradition of tolerance probably unequalled in any other religion. When the second Khalifa, Omar Ibn Al Khattab, was asked to come from Arabia to Jerusalem to receive the keys of the city from its patriarch, he entered the city on foot (out of humility). From there he issued the famous "Covenant of Omar". It guarantees to this day the sanctity of the city's churches and the freedom of worship for all its inhabitants. On this momentous occasion, he politely refused the invitation of the patriarch to pray in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for fear that one day a Muslim might claim it on the pretext that Omar had prayed in it. Instead, he prayed on a plot of land opposite the church where, the "Mosque of Omar" stands today.

Jews and Christians are "patronised people" or "Thamis" according to Islamic law. They are entitled to their own courts where their religious laws are applied. No Muslim shall offend any member of their communities. Mohammad warns in one of his famous sayings: "Whoever harms a 'Thimmi' I shall personally be his antagonist on the Day of Judgement". If a Muslim should enter into an argument on religious issues with Jews or Christians he is instructed to argue with them in the most gentle manner. As for the Jews, their history testifies that they could not find a safe haven from the horrors of persecution they had suffered in Europe during the Middle Ages except in Muslim Spain where, "they experienced a Golden Age of Jewish history"

(Continued on page 5)

IM. KAHIL



Left's victory raises questions for Argentine future

By Andres Wolberg-Stok
Reuter

BUENOS AIRES — For investors who have bet billions of dollars on Argentina's "economic miracle", the left's spectacular gains in a key vote raise the question of whether president Carlos Menem's magic could be wearing thin.

Some 17 billion in capital flowed in last year, attracted by Mr. Menem's seemingly unerring political flair and by free-market reforms which in three years have turned a once dying economy into one of the world's top emerging markets.

Partly on the strength of this success, Sunday's election — for a constituent assembly that will allow Mr. Menem to run next year for a second term — gave the ruling Peronists what they proudly underscored was their fifth consecutive nationwide win since 1987.

In the last vote, in October, the Peronists even took Buenos Aires, traditionally a stronghold of their Social Democrat rivals, the Radical

Party.

But Sunday, to everybody's surprise, they were trounced in the capital city itself, not by the radicals, but by a ragtag band of disgruntled Peronists, independents, leftists and Communists running as the Broad Front.

It was an unprecedented win for the left in a city where its last triumph was the election of a lone socialist senator in 1961.

Capitalising on the radicals' sudden decision last November to drop their opposition to Mr. Menem's charter reform plan, the Broad Front focused on rejection of this Peronist-radical pact and on charges of government corruption.

The tactic paid off handsomely. The front took more than 35 per cent in the city of Buenos Aires, a lead of more than 10 points over the Peronists, leaving the radicals a distant third with less than 15 per cent.

The front also captured the southern province of Neuquen, where its top candidate was a Roman Catholic bishop who has long taken out-

spoken stands on human rights issues.

"Nobody, not even the pollsters, foresaw the front's victory in Neuquen," Mr. Menem told a news conference later.

In the key Buenos Aires province, the most populous of Argentina's 24 voting districts, the front trailed far behind the Peronists' 43 per cent or so, but some projections showed it edging out the radicals.

Mr. Menem, 63, strived not to address these results separately in his news conference after the election, arguing that what mattered was the overall outcome across the country.

"The country is one, there is no such thing as airtight compartments," he told reporters.

Local analysts said the results might have been different if voters had been picking a government rather than appointing the 305 members of a constitutional assembly, whose central outcome is already a certainty.

"The vote for the Broad

Front is a protest vote, a vote of anger," said Mariano Grondona, one of Argentina's most respected political commentators. "It's not a mandate to do something."

Mr. Menem took comfort in the fact that even in the northern province of Santiago Del Estero, scene last year of the worst riots in four years of belt-tightening, the Peronists had taken more than half the votes.

But he also acknowledged the rise in some provinces of a right-wing party led by a cashiered army lieutenant-colonel, Aldo Rico, along with the gains of the Broad Front.

Mr. Menem's predicament may stem in part from his success in roping in the radicals with November's deal on constitutional reform, which deprived critics and opponents of a traditional outlet and drove them into the arms of these smaller parties.

"Now, evidently, there are two more political groups that have demonstrated their clear presence," Mr. Menem said.

LETTERS

Irrelevant opinion

To the Editor:

I CAREFULLY read Mrs. G. Woodward's letter (Jordan Times, April 7). Being a JTV watcher since many years, I have always appreciated Jordan Television (JTV) programmes and their continuous improvements.

As regards Arabic series with English subtitles, I must confess that "End of a Brave Man" was an excellent series and I do not share Mrs. Woodward's views; she should most probably try to become more sensitive to the Middle Eastern culture and way of life (past and present).

Moreover, I should like to congratulate the JTV sport services to air all the international football games: European, African, Arab and Jordanian. This is a very appropriate and popular initiative which the foreign community in Jordan appreciates. Again for Mrs. Woodward's benefit, I should like to inform her that the most popular sport in the world is football. The opinion of some U.S. citizens living in Jordan, while the U.S. is ready to welcome "World Cup 1994", seems to be totally irrelevant.

Moreover, Jordanian sport lovers constitute the absolute overwhelming majority who are watching with pleasure these wonderful football games.

Mrs. Anna Maria Khatib
and friends,
Amman.

'Catastrophic' is JTV's programming

To the Editor:

OH HOW I do so agree with Mrs. Woodward's comments on the catastrophic programming on Channel 2 of Jordan Television (JTV). Having worked at JTV and been associated with the local broadcast media for the past 25 years, I have to represent their concern.

The general feeling is that if current trends continue, it would be better to shut down the channel completely. We are perfectly able to watch Arabic series on the main channel (although professional subtitled would be a kind foreign channel, could they please confine the destruction of those who can bear the irritation may choose to view, and the rest of us will know to invest in satellite dishes and home videos.

Morag McKay,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are return of unused manuscripts.

Austrian president briefed on water problems

(Continued from page 1)

to resolve the water problem in the region. The plan, which was rejected by all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict then, stipulated that Jordan would be getting 377 million cubic metres of Yarmouk River water and 100 million cubic metres of the Jordan River.

He said because other countries have been exploiting water sources which were flowing into the Jordan River, Jordan at the present receives only 110 million cubic metres from the Yarmouk River annually, which covers only 30 per cent of Jordan's water needs.

In addition, Jordan has not been using any water from the upper Jordan River since 1949 when Israel started pumping water from it to outside the Jordan River basin, which means that Israel fully controls

the upper Jordan River in addition to taking 35 per cent of the Yarmouk River water, he said.

The JVA secretary general said Jordan did not save any effort to develop the Jordan Valley and to convert it into an area of progress and prosperity despite the Arab-Israeli conflict and the tension surrounding it.

As a result of the successful development plan of the Jordan Valley, local revenues have risen to 20 per cent and the valley population increased five times over two decades, thus reversing the phenomenon prevailing in third World countries in that people migrate from rural areas to cities.

Dr. Wislah expressed hope that the Middle East peace process could help Jordan re-

gain its share of the Jordan River.

Mr. Klesitl also visited the Dead Sea, where he was briefed by Water and Irrigation Minister Hisham Al Khatib on government plans to develop the area for tourism purposes and to properly exploit the Dead Sea water.

Mr. Klesitl expressed his country's desire to offer Jordan its expertise in tourism.

Earlier Tuesday, the Austrian president visited the tombs of the late King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, the founder of the Kingdom, and late King Talal Ben Abdullah, and laid wreaths of flowers on their tombs.

Mr. Klesitl was accompanied on the tour by the King's advisor Yanzal Hikmat, who is heading the honour delegation accompanying the Austrian president.

Fighting continues around Bosnian village

(Continued from page 1)

"The Bosnian Serbs are firing artillery and anti-aircraft (rounds) and the Bosnian army is responding with sporadic mortar fire," said U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) spokesman Roh Amink.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), launched air strikes on Sunday and Monday against Bosnian Serb forces besieging Gorazde after Serb gunners ignored repeated warnings to stop shelling the enclave.

Elsewhere in Bosnia, Serbs launched heavy shelling

attacks on the Bosnian army in central Bosnia at Olovo and at Dastanko, near Vares, (UNPROFOR) said.

The Serbs had pounded Muslim forces at Dastanko with more than 300 rounds but had failed to gain ground in the offensive, Major Amink told reporters in Sarajevo.

President Yeltsin, on a visit to Spain, told the West that any attempt to resolve the Bosnian crisis by force could only lead to more bloodletting.

"I am convinced that the resolution there should be only political talks," Mr. Yeltsin told a news conference in Mad-

rid.

"The task there cannot be resolved by force. It will be war for ever."

U.S. President Clinton left open the possibility of widening the scope of American-led air attacks against Bosnian Serbs.

He said five other "safe areas" in Bosnia might come under the protection of air power. "I wouldn't rule anything out," Mr. Clinton said.

The president said U.S. warplanes are at the disposal of the U.N. commander, Gen. Rose, if he feels U.N. personnel are threatened.

'Butchery' continues among Rwandans

(Continued from page 1)

staying in the capital. The British Broadcasting Corporation said the group left in a convoy for an unknown destination, prompting further panic in Kigali.

The country's political parties have been unable to agree who would serve in the government following the bloodshed that has convulsed Rwanda since the presidents of Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi died in a plane crash.

The government said the jet had been shot down, and peo-

ple near Kigali's airport reported bearing shooting, but the cause of the crash has not been confirmed.

The death of Rwanda's president ruined a fragile peace between the Hutu-led government and the Tutsi-led rebels.

It also touched off a rampage of killing and looting by rogue elements of Rwanda's army and armed gangs of drunken youths and men who have attacked clerics, aid workers and even slaughtered hospital patients as they lay in their cots.

Almost all the deaths involve Rwandans. Shortly after

the plane crash at Kigali, 10 Belgian peacekeepers were killed as was a French military officer and his wife.

French and Belgian paratroopers collected a group of expatriates from a school in Kigali Tuesday but refused to take 11 Rwandans — U.N. workers and their relatives.

"We spent the night outdoors, without eating, in the cold," said Vinney Nsenyimana, of those left huddling outside the gates of the Antoinette de Saint Exupery school. "you've seen the corpses in the road. We're in danger of death."

By Laura King

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Faced with disgrace, Morihiro Hosokawa's Samurai ancestors might have resorted to seppuku, or suicide. Mr. Hosokawa, Japan's prime minister of eight months, was left with the modern-day political equivalent.

"I have decided to take responsibility... And step down," he told reporters Friday after weeks of growing pressure over apparent improprieties in his personal finances.

But despite his inglorious departure, Mr. Hosokawa is leaving a legacy: a political landscape powerfully altered by his brief tenure. In some ways, he did honour his pledge to help clean up Japan's corruption-ridden political system.

The election-reform package his government enacted earlier this year was not as strong as the plan he envisioned, but it was a solid first step towards breaking out of the old money-and-politics mold.

Mr. Hosokawa's departure also signaled that after years of casual and brazen graft, Japanese politicians are finally becoming accountable. That message hadn't penetrated even though scandals brought down four of the past five governments.

But the primary financial scandal surrounding Mr. Hosokawa involved dealings in 1982. His woes show that it may be hard for Japan to find leaders whose financial pasts can match up to the new ethical standards.

Leaders of the divided coalition that Mr. Hosokawa led met Saturday to try to agree on a successor, but could only agree that they really ought to try to agree. Soon.

Before Mr. Hosokawa, Japanese politics was an old man's club. At 56, he was a full generation younger than his predecessors.

By custom, Japanese politicians rose to power by cultivating favour with their superiors and by accumulating seniority. That left little room in politics for new ideas and fresh thinking.

The rise of the charismatic Mr. Hosokawa, a political outsider, whose main experience had been as governor of his home prefecture, meant that a politician could gain



Japanese workers watch a giant television screen showing Mr. Hosokawa at a press conference during which he announced his resignation (AFP photo)

The end of a Samurai

Hosokawa steps down after leaving lasting mark on Japan's political scene

power with leadership qualities and popular appeal.

His coalition took charge after the fed-up electorate ended four decades of virtual one-party rule by the corrupt liberal democrats. It was a dramatic lesson: a vote can make a difference.

The generational shift was important in other ways. Only seven when World War II ended, Mr. Hosokawa was the first truly postwar leader, seeking to help ease decades of mistrust of Japan by the Asian neighbours it brutalised back then.

One of his first acts as prime minister was to apologise for Japan's wartime aggression. "It was wrong," he said. That simple statement earned him the ire of Japan's right wing, but won

him respect from world leaders.

Mr. Hosokawa also took on Japan's powerful bureaucracy, arguing that deregulation was needed to unfetter the recession-plagued economy.

He broke another taboo: rice. For decades, it was a truism that any politician who tried to open Japan's rice market would be hounded out of office.

But the popular prime minister knew he had the political capital to end the ban on rice imports. Foreign rice is now on the shelves, and being accepted by the public as tasty and inexpensive.

Mr. Hosokawa, in fact, was the best fired the downtrodden Japanese consumer

has had in the prime minister's residence for a long time.

He said ordinary Japanese, who pay sky-high prices for goods and services, live in tiny homes, work long hours and endure inhumanly long commutes. weren't reaping their share of Japan's wealth. That should change, he said.

Then there was Mr. Hosokawa's personal style. Before him, Japanese prime ministers tended to be rumpled, bald and fussy-looking; he wore elegant suits and sported a full head of fluffy hair.

At his first news conference, Mr. Hosokawa caused a stir by gesturing expansively and casually pointing a pen at his questioners, rather than standing stiffly behind the podium.

He didn't display the parliamentary hodge signifying his rank, and wore lightly his aristocratic heritage as scion of a distinguished warrior clan whose history stretched back 600 years.

He was soft-spoken, cultivated and courteous, rarely imperious. And he wasn't above spoofing himself; he starred in a Samurai movie as one of his ancestors.

He even managed a fairly dignified exit, unlike his predecessor, Kiichi Miyazawa, who heggged abjectly to be allowed to keep his job.

OK, so the Hosokawa administration wasn't exactly a Japanese camelot. Or maybe it was, if camelot is about trying and failing, and idealism that can't quite live up to its own ideals.

'Culture and values from an Arab-Islamic perspective'

during which they enjoyed an unprecedented cultural growth and freedom of worship."

Islam views Man as part of nature and God's vicegerent on Earth, which has been given to him as a "trust" to derive benefits from it and use it with modesty and respect. Verses in the Koran remind human beings that life is one homogeneous organism and that plants and animals are "nations" which glorify God in their own silent prayers. They must be treated kindly and that, although they were rendered by God to serve human kind, they have their rightful shares in the bounties of the Earth. Man is also commanded in the Koran to enjoy wisely the natural resources God has given him but not to destroy or waste them. The Koran encourages frugality and describes spendthrifts as "the brothers of Satan". Mohammad tells his companions on one occasion "not to waste water" even if they were "washing up at the bank of a river."

Many verses in the Koran speak about harmony and "balance" in God's creation; Man is warned in vigorous words not to disturb this equilibrium, otherwise he will destroy himself. God says in the Koran, "everything we have created is in due proportion". In another verse, God warns: "Do not spread corruption on Earth after it has been put in order". Islam enjoins Man not to cut down trees except according to his needs and that he should plant trees in order to keep the planet green. Mohammad gives a very revealing instruction to his followers: "Even if the world is coming to an end and you have a palm seedling in your hands, plant it."

One cannot think of a document that sets down the rules of conduct for Muslims in their approach to nature and in their treatment of their adversaries in war better than the one containing the instructions of Abu Bakr, the first Khalifa, to Yazid Ben Abu Sufyan who was the commander of the Arab army, which was dispatched to engage the Byzantines in battle around the year 632 A.D. His instructions were: "Do not kill a woman, a boy or an old man. Do not take fruits from the trees and do not destroy people's houses. Do

not kill a sheep or a camel except to satisfy your need for food. Do not burn trees." In another set of instructions by Omar Ibn El Khattab to another commander, he orders him, "not to poison drinking water, not to kill a wounded soldier and not to pursue any one who fled from battle... And as you traverse the desert you will find people who have given themselves to God's worship in isolated places, leave them alone and don't harm them," (referring to Christian monasteries in the Syrian desert).

Among other principles of Islam, which has been incorporated in Arab culture, is the high value it sets on the sanctity of human life. The history of Muslim countries did not know the Holocaust, or the "ethnic cleansing" which Europe has known. Brutality and cruelty of which Islam is accused today are antithetical to the true spirit of Islam. And if acts of wanton violence or cruelty were, or are, committed by Muslims, they do not constitute the rule, but the exception; and frequently they are in response to similar acts committed by their adversaries as in the case of Bosnia, for example. It has to be clear, however, that the killing of innocent people, under whatever pretext, is not condoned or accepted by Islam.

The economic system in Islam is designed to provide the basic necessities of life to the people and to establish social justice in society.

Islam values generosity and compassion towards the poor, the orphan, the widow, the neighbour and the stranger. Muslims are encouraged to give food and shelter to the needy. Mohammad says: "He who sleeps with a full stomach while his neighbour sleeps hungry will be deprived of God's mercy." Islam also calls for the respect of women, caring of children and old people, especially one's parents.

Because of the importance it attaches to the protection of the family and to public morals, Islam takes a strong stand against promiscuity and any such behaviour which may lead to it.

Islam is essentially a religion of peace. It calls upon its followers to exhaust all possible avenues to achieve it. War is prohibited, except in self-

defence, to rescue a weak people in distress, for the protection of the nation's territory and for the preservation of the faith. Islam prompts Muslims to put down their arms and to make peace with their enemies once justice is established and aggression is repulsed. God commanded Mohammad: "If they incline towards peace, incline thou to it as well, and should they seek to deceive you... God's support is enough for thee."

Muslims are taught to be intolerant of injustice, whether it is committed by their rulers or by foreigners. Therefore a good Muslim has an obligation to create a just and equitable society where the poor and the underprivileged are treated decently. While many of these values are still influential in many Arab and Muslim countries, some have lost much of their effectiveness and validity. This has been caused by many factors, but mainly by the decline of Muslim power in the world and the subsequent Western domination of Muslim countries.

There is no doubt that some of the liberal humanistic values of the Western civilisation such as freedom of thought and of scientific enquiry, democracy, respect for basic human rights and free enterprise, to name but a few, have contributed a great deal to human progress. But its excessive "materialistic" nature and its encouragement of "consumerism" as an economic merit, its greed; its insensitivity towards the problems of the less privileged nations of the world, its heavy-handed attempts to impose its value system globally have produced colonialism, the pollution of the environment, the attack on nature and are the main cause of various forms of suffering and tension we see in the world today.

These negative by-products of the Western civilisation are also producing numerous social evils within the Western societies themselves. Therefore, it is no wonder that more and more thinkers and social scientists in the West are beginning to question whether the Western civilisation has, by abandoning ethical constraints, assumed a "Faustian" nature which will ultimately invite its doom. Many indigenous cultures in the world now seem threatened by the onslaught of the Western civilisation and its

value system. This has already created protests in the Third World against what is often described as "cultural colonialism". In the Muslim World, such an assault is causing anger and defiance amongst the majority of people. They reject the West's cultural encroachment and struggle to preserve their Islamic identity.

Commenting on the present cultural conflict with the West, the former prime minister of the Sudan, Sadek El Mahdi, once said, "...Backward and deprived, the Muslim World faces an economic and military giant with the moral and spiritual scruples of a flea. Needless to say, this is not a pleasant encounter." Our world today is afflicted with a series of complicated and entangled crises the resolution of which seems to escape the wisdom of statesmen and politicians: crises between the rich North and the poor South, between the rich and the poor within each society, and between Man and Nature. The "modernisation" process which started in the West has spread to the four corners of the globe. The Western model of "progress and development" has become the fascinating reference for the elites in each continent. It was thought that this type of "modernisation" would spur improvement in the human condition and would ensure prosperity, peace, happiness and freedom for all people. While this concept has guaranteed a form of social and economic prosperity in the West, it has engendered poverty, insecurity and socio-economic maladjustments in developing countries.

This situation should not be allowed to continue if the human race is to survive. What is really needed is a change of course, a fundamental soul-searching, a genuine examination of many ideas, values and patterns of behaviour, the validity of which have been taken for granted so far. As a preliminary step, the West (being the overpowering peacemaker of the world) has to abandon its naive assumption that it has achieved the pinnacle of perfection and that it has nothing to learn from others.

The West has to examine carefully its values in light of their consequences. It must discard the ones which have contributed to the present

chaos and prevented the creation of a happier, more equitable and harmonious world. The West has to approach other cultures and their value systems with modesty and the willingness to learn from them. After all, the three great monotheistic religions and the outburst of human wisdom emanated in the East.

Islam is not, as some would like you to believe, an intrinsic natural enemy of the West, nor is the clash with it inevitable as Dr. S. Huntington of Harvard claimed recently in a famous article. Naturally, Islam rejects certain aspects of the Western value system. Muslims refuse Western political, cultural and economic domination. Once the West recognises Islam as a religion worthy of respect, its people deserving freedom, fair and equal treatment, much of the existing tension would disappear and a healthy climate of reconciliation and cooperation would then prevail.

The human race is now facing challenges which imply dangerous threats to the future of Mankind. These challenges cannot be engaged properly and effectively except through a concerted effort in which all nations and all cultures participate. But for this to happen a new world order has to be created on the basis of justice, freedom and dignity for all. It is impossible to build a common front and generate a worldwide spirit of "companionship" to face these challenges while preserving the present unjust and inequitable world order. Under the present order, the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer. The Third World countries are left with no voice and a few bargaining chips in the international power game.

Thirteen years ago, Willy Brandt, the late German Chancellor, headed a commission to study the state of relations between the North and the South. His report was published under the title "A Programme for Survival". In that report he stated that "in one part of the world most people live in relative comfort, while in another, they struggle for sheer survival. There must be an end to deprivation and suffering. We believe that nations can join in the common task of ensuring their survival in order to make the world more peaceful and less uncertain. But fundamental changes in relations between North and South are crucial to this task. The world is a unity and we must begin to act as members of this unity."

It is most regrettable that this observation, coming from such a wise statesman, has not yet been heeded. For such a global fight for survival to succeed the humanistic values of all religions must also be revived and mobilised. A close scrutiny will reveal that what unites the followers of all faiths is more than what divides them.

Finally, at this dangerous juncture in human history, what is needed is the making of a "new"

human being: universal in his outlook to the world, conscious of his kinship with all members of the human family and of his affinity with nature. What we need for the creation of a new world of peace, justice and prosperity for all, is a human being who embodies the words of the great American humanist Thomas Paine when he described himself by saying, "The world is my country, all mankind are my brothers and to do good, is my religion."

The writer is former minister of education and former chief editor of Al Dustour Arabic daily. The above is the text of an address he delivered at the International Baccalaureate Regional Conference for the Middle East and North Africa, which was held in Amman recently.

The British Airway Theatre at Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan Present

Karl Howman, Virginia Gilchrist, Jon Iles

Mary Conlon, Graeme Henderson, Anthony Psaila and Anthony Morton

A touch of Spring

The long running West End comedy by SAMUEL TAYLOR

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New world trade body aims to boost jobs, incomes

MARRAKESH, Morocco (R) — The world trade watchdog GATT said Tuesday a new international trade treaty to be signed this week should help usher the world into an era of prosperity at the start of the 21st century.

The forecast, predicting a boost from the wide-ranging accord of at least \$235 billion a year to world income within a decade, was issued as ministers from some 125 countries gathered in this oasis city for the four-day signing ceremonies.

GATT chief Peter Sutherland said the treaty — the result of seven years of tough negotiations on slashing tariffs and opening up service and textile markets across the globe — would bring benefits to both rich and poor states. "There are no losers. Every-one stands to gain," the tough, ebullient former Irish attorney-general told Reuters.

Under the treaty, a new World Trade Organisation (WTO) will be born early next year to absorb the GATT — the 47-year-old General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade — with stronger powers to enforce rules and prevent trade conflict.

The WTO is specifically called to work for raising living standards and ensuring full employment by expanding production and trade through rational, and environmentally sustainable, exploitation of the world's resources.

Trade officials describe creation of the new body as the "crowning achievement" of the bargaining in the GATT's Uruguay round, launched in 1986 and concluded three years behind schedule in December last year.

At the Marrakesh meeting, formally opened Tuesday by Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed of Morocco, foreign and trade ministers will set out their own vision of how it should function and what it should discuss.



Camels pass in front of the official placard of the Marrakesh ministerial meeting near the Congress Palace where industrial ministers will cut tariffs on industrial products by 38 per cent on average under the world trade pact to be signed this week (AFP photo)

But acrimony over its agenda, which seemed likely only a few days ago amid a dispute between the United States and developing countries on a trade-add-labour link, has been averted by an agreement that any issue can be raised in Marrakesh.

During the week, ministers are expected to propose topics for WTO consideration rang-

ing from the sensitive labour issue through competition policy and the effects of regional trade groupings to the link between trade and immigration.

The final ceremony — at which the ministers will put their signatures to the round's final act and to a special treaty creating the WTO — will take place Friday, and is expected

to last several hours.

They will also issue a "Marrakesh declaration" committing their countries to work for further liberalisation of world trade and final rejection of the protectionism that has often in the past sparked global recession.

"I have no hesitation," Mr. Sutherland told a news conference Monday, "in stating that the Uruguay Round results are a prescription for development and reform and can lay the basis for a new prosperity where it is most needed."

The GATT forecast for benefits from the round was based on the tariff-cutting offers across thousands of goods and products submitted by most countries involved in the negotiations by March 15 this year.

Economists at GATT headquarters in Geneva said that together with the tariff bindings — or commitments not to raise import duties above set levels — also pledged, these offers would lead to an annual world trade increase of \$755 billion by 2005.

The forecasts were lower than a more optimistic prediction from the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which put the income rise within a decade of the implementation of the round accords at \$274 billion.

But the GATT analysts said the gains would certainly be higher, because their forecast did not take into account the effect of expanded trade in services — like banking, insurance, and tourism — which is more difficult to quantify.

Their report, issued in Marrakesh, said the Uruguay Round target of a global reduction on tariffs of 30 per cent had been easily surpassed — even though in some sensitive areas like textiles, footwear and fish cuts had been below expectations.

Developed countries had re-

duced the industrial tariffs applied to each other by 38 per cent, and by 37 for farm products. For goods from developing countries, richer states had cut their tariffs by an overall figure of 37 per cent.

In a separate despatch Reuters said the new world trade treaty covers everything from apples to zinc.

Ministers from some 120 countries are set to endorse the GATT treaty as well as two other critical documents.

The additional documents are a list of commitments by individual countries to reduce or eliminate tariffs and other barriers, and pledges to open up trade in services.

Together they make up "the final act embodying the results of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations" — more than 22,000 pages weighing 175 kilograms.

Following are the main elements of the final act.

Market access — This is the backbone of the act. Countries pledge to cut tariffs on industrial and farm goods by an average of about 37 per cent.

The U.S. and European Union agree to trim tariffs between them by one half. **Services** — For the first time, rules will govern an estimated \$4 billion in annual trade in services like banking, insurance and travel, as well as the movement of labour.

But only minimal market liberalisation commitments were made, largely because Washington and Brussels could not iron out disagreements over audio-visual products like television programmes and films, financial services and shipping.

The U.S. reserves the right to deny other countries favourable access to the lucrative U.S. financial services market but will hold off for at least 18 months. Washington has threatened to challenge EU curbs on audio-visual goods.



A motorcycle policeman stands in front of the Congress Palace where the GATT meeting is being held (AFP photo)

Countries could demand an exemption from the obligation to offer most favoured nation treatment to service trade partners.

Agriculture — Also for the first time, agriculture is folded into the GATT. The blueprint is the 1992 Blair House accord reached between the U.S. and the EU as amended in talks last December. It:

— Converts all non-tariff barriers like quotas into tariffs, which are reduced 36 per cent for industrialised countries, 24 per cent for poor nations. The cuts will be implemented over six years for rich countries, 10 for others.

— Forces countries with closed farm markets to import at least three per cent of domestic consumption of the product, rising to five per cent over six years. Japan will import four per cent of its rice, rising to eight per cent. South Korea will import one per cent of its rice, rising to two per cent in 1999.

Cuts trade-distorting support for farmers by 20 per cent over six years, 13.3 per cent for the developing world.

— Cuts the value of direct export subsidies by 36 per cent over six years, volume by 21 per cent. The base period is 1986-90, or 1991-92 if exports were higher in that period.

— Exempts the poorest nations from the farm reforms. **Textiles** — Import quotas on textiles and clothing, in place under the multi-fibre arrangement since 1974, will be phased out over 10 years.

Anti-dumping — Rules on anti-dumping — imports priced below their value in the domestic market — are clarified. **Intellectual property** — The treaty toughens up protection for patents, copyrights, rights of performers and producers of sound recordings, trademarks, and labels of origin.

Expanding GATT — set up as a temporary body in 1947, the GATT will be transformed into a permanent watchdog called the World Trade Organisation (WTO), with status equal to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The WTO will start operations between January and July next year.

U.S. Trade chief Mickey Kantor flew into a GATT signing ceremony Tuesday, urging the world to seize "the third great challenge of the century" and usher in a new era of economic harmony.

"Economic globalisation is a fact. We cannot hold back the tides of change, all we can do is help shape it," Mr. Kantor told Reuters.

The U.S. trade representative said the four-day talks were not just the long-awaited end to nearly eight years of wrangling but also the start of a new post-cold war economic order.

"This is a beginning in every possible way," Mr. Kantor said in an interview en route to North Africa.

Mr. Kantor said the GATT meeting — more celebratory than substantive — was a landmark to rival the U.S. lurch into protectionism that followed World War I and the post-World War II turn-outwards that spawned institutions from GATT to NATO.

"Now, in the post-cold war world, we face a third great challenge: How to best deal with the inevitable globalisation of our economy and all the challenges that come with it," he said.

Air France staff back job cuts, wage freeze

PARIS (R) — Air France workers voted heavily in favour of thousands of job cuts and a wage freeze, giving chairman Christian Blanc a massive vote of confidence by backing his rescue plan for the ailing state airline.

An Air France official said 51.3 per cent of those who cast a vote in the 10-day postal referendum backed the plan and 16.5 per cent opposed it. He put turnout, earlier estimated at 83 per cent, at 84.9 per cent of the 40,000-strong workforce.

"I am proud for Air France," Mr. Blanc told reporters.

"The staff of Air France have just asserted their determination about what becomes of Air France. We are all going to pull in the same direction," he said.

The vote is a triumph for Mr. Blanc, the left-leaning former head of the Paris Metro

and Bus Authority, who was brought in to save Air France in October after unions effectively ousted his predecessor, Bernard Attali, by staging a massive strike against his even more drastic recovery plans.

Mr. Blanc had threatened to quit if staff did not give him a clear majority.

The government promised a huge 20 billion franc (\$3.4 billion) cash injection for the loss-making airline. If Mr. Blanc's plan got the backing of Air France's workforce,

Air France is expected to show an annual loss of some 7.5 billion francs (\$1.3 billion) when accounts for 1993 are published and would be in serious trouble without the state's fresh cash injection.

Force Ouvriere, the majority union at Air France representing some 35 per cent of employees, said the result showed the staff's maturity, but two other unions said the

vote showed staff had succumbed to pressure.

"A majority of people gave in to blackmail," said Michel Paschal, a representative of the communist-led union CGT. "The pressures of employees made the result inevitable," said Christian Deslandes, a delegate for the CFDT union.

Unionists also said that the fact staff voted by post from home, where families are more worried about hanging on to jobs than with labour solidarity, favoured a "yes" vote.

Transport Minister Bernard Bosson, speaking on television just after the final result was known, promised the government would do its best to convince the European Commission of the worthiness of Air France's rescue plan.

"The men and women of Air France have decided to fight so that Air France can live. They will not fight alone. The government will fight with them," Mr. Bosson said.

France has raised eyebrows in Brussels with its plans for two big cash injections for troubled state firms, one for Air France and one for computer firm Compagnie Des Machines Bull.

France has to convince the European Commission not to block the cash injections. The European Union has strict rules about governments supporting state firms, to avoid unfair competition with firms from other member states.

Six unions, representing 52 per cent of the Air France staff, signed Mr. Blanc's outline plan 10 days ago but eight other unions failed to sign the deal, triggering the referendum.

Mr. Blanc wrote in a letter accompanying the ballot papers: "The choice is a choice of conscience. Individually we have to ask ourselves if we want the company to fight and be reborn."

Japan enshrines rice imports in food policy

TOKYO (R) — Japan's farm minister Tuesday announced a new national food policy that for the first time incorporates imports of rice, the country's staple food.

The announcement, which reverses Japan's age-old policy of banning commercial imports of rice, was made in the annual report by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

(MAFF) — the first such report since Japan accepted a partial end to its ban on commercial rice imports last December.

"We will provide food basically from domestic supplies, but also include imports and reserves when appropriate," Agriculture Minister Eiichi Hata told a news conference after a cabinet meeting Tues-

day. "We will take special care to maintain control over the supply and demand situation in rice," he said.

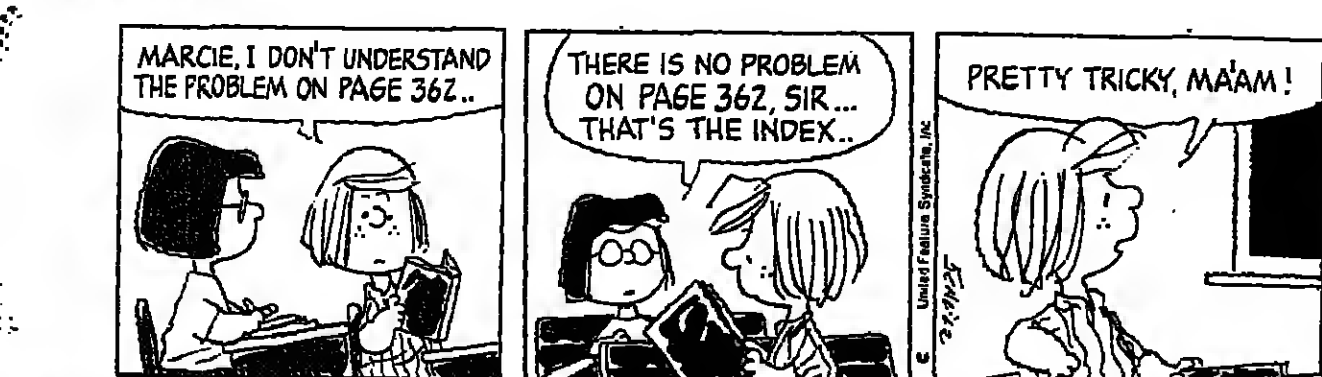
Claiming concerns over national food security, Japan regulates rice output, pricing and distribution, and bans commercial imports under the food control law.

But in December, Tokyo

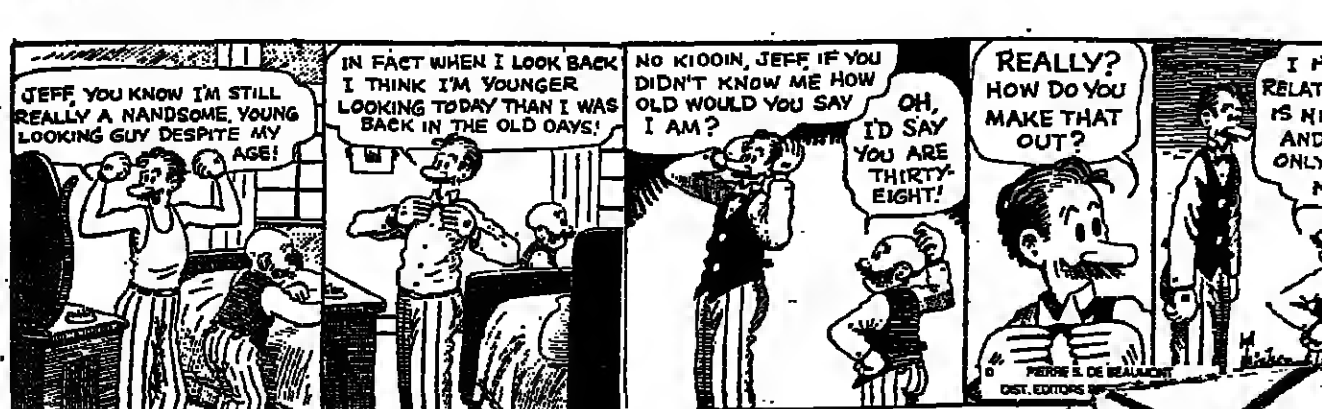
promised to import four to eight per cent of its 10 million-tonne annual consumption of rice from April 1995, as part of a concession to help conclude talks under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Now it plans to change the law to incorporate the GATT agreement.

Peanuts



Mutt'n' Jeff



Nigeria faces acute fuel shortage

LAGOS (R) — Long queues for petrol formed at filling stations in Lagos and other cities as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was delivering to marketers and who the marketers were in turn selling to.

Fuel scarcity has been a regular feature in Nigeria for more than a year and is blamed on several factors including smuggling to neighbouring countries where the commodity is more expensive and is sold in convertible currency.

The current crunch is the second in less than a week in Africa's biggest producer of crude oil and an official said it was caused when a lorry crashed into an electricity pole near the Lagos fuel depot and cut power supplies.

"I slept here and could not go to work because I can't abandon my car," said motorist Tajui Taiwo, a civil servant, in the middle of a mile-long queue.

Last week NNPC said there were enough fuel products at oil depots in the country to end the shortage.

we must solve it," Mr. Etiebet said.

He ordered that accounts be submitted to him regularly by both sides on how much fuel NNPC was delivering to marketers and who the marketers were in turn selling to.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY APRIL 13, 1994
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A good Moon trine Neptune and Uranus day for you to coordinate your efforts with other persons in projects that are vital to your success and happiness. Improve the value of your property.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) It would be wise to permit a good friend to help you solve a personal problem. Don't spend more money now than you can afford on any items.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Study your position in life and know if any changes would be wise to make. Any public duties should be handled cleverly by you today.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Go after personal goals in a positive fashion and you gain them easily now. Sidestep one who wants to slow up your progress to your success.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Confer with an expert who can help you gain a personal aim. Relax at home tonight with your mate and you will keep out of trouble.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Listening and following ideas of associates brings good results now. Take the right steps to improve your health and you will feel great for a long while.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Know what your greatest

aims are and go after them in a positive manner. Don't waste time on trivial matters when there are more important ones.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You have fine ideas that should be put in operation without delay. Come to a better understanding with a close tie and you will be very happy.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) The mood at home could be changing rapidly, so be sure that you at least are steadfast. Be careful of strangers so you won't be in danger.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A better understanding about regular routines with associates can be reached now. Steer clear of trouble situations today and tonight.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Put more zip into your regular activities and accomplish more. Don't take your mate so much for granted and you will have much love and affection.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Go after your aims in a more sure and up-to-date way and gain them. Planning new activities for the future is wise and valuable for you now.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Study new systems that will help you advance in your line of endeavour. Take no chances with your reputation or you may damage it beyond repair.

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By Harold Arnold and Mike Argison

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

WHYSO
HICCK
ELEVAN
SIGHAR

You're gonna love this!

HOW THE HOT DOG VENDOR HANDLED HIS JOB.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: WITH "O O O O O O O O O O"

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: KINKY TWINE JOSTLE PAROLE
Answer: Why the drama teacher became a coach — HE KNEW THE "PLAYS"

THE Daily Crossword by Bernice Gordon

ACROSS
1 Spot on a horse's forehead
5 Norwegian king
10 Fast planes
14 Daughter of Eurytus
15 Senator from Idaho, once President
16 Reverend
17 Certain drink
19 Abuse
20 Syncretism
21 Oval relative
22 Circle part
24 Climbing plant
25 Exhaust
29 Household
32 — tree (continued)
33 Distracted
35 Teutonic dwarf
36 Egyptian
38 Sing
40 Chinese border river

DOWN
1 In law
43 Nocturnal larva
45 Tiny
46 Arranged in three
48 Passes
50 Remove
51 Millieu for Hoover
52 Cut short
53 Holm of old films
58 Atlas
60 Make a disc
62 Sent, direct, or hemi
63 Musical opus
64 Artisan lady
65 Gaelic
66 Carried on
67 Body of an organism
37 Largest of the Canary Islands
38 Fished
42 Beer ingredient
44 Fur
47 Seaweed
48 — of eight
52 Tennis great
53 Tusk
54 Computer info
55 Turn over
56 Sound; pre-
57 Fr
58 Collection of Norse poems
59 Small dog

Mediators arrive to break S. African election impasse

JOHANNESBURG (R) — International mediators started arriving in Johannesburg Tuesday to seek a way out of a constitutional impasse threatening more violence in the run-up to South Africa's first all-race elections.

The first to arrive was Lord Carrington, the 74-year-old former British foreign secretary who negotiated Zimbabwe's 1980 independence after a guerrilla war against Ian Smith's white minority regime. The army said at least eight people were killed overnight in violence in the Zulu heartland of KwaZulu and surrounding Natal province, where the poll-boycotting Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party is demanding virtual self-rule.

But the African National Congress (ANC) and the government has rejected any postponement of the elections despite mediation. "The Inkatha Freedom Party goes to the mediation with the view that it will be able to persuade the mediators to postpone the election dates," ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa said. "We want to make it clear that those days

are sacrosanct, they cannot be tampered with," he told the weekly session of the multiparty Transitional Executive Council (TEC) overseeing the run-up to the April 26-28 polls. More than 170 people have died in the region since President F.W. de Klerk imposed a state of emergency there on March 31 to halt spiralling violence ahead of the elections.

The bloodshed, in which more than 10,000 people have died over the past decade, is mainly between Zulu supporters of Nelson Mandela's ANC and chief Mangosuthu Buthe's Inkatha.

The ANC agreed to Inkatha's call for international mediation over its demands for a large measure of autonomy for KwaZulu-Natal, home territory for the 8.5 million Zulus.

The financial aid, a key indicator of foreign investor sentiment, edged upwards in Tuesday morning trade as calm returned after plunging to a record low of 5.62 to the dollar over concerns about the political situation. There was initial confusion

at Johannesburg's Jan Smuts Airport over Lord Carrington's arrival, with security guards at the VIP lounge denying any knowledge of him.

He eventually emerged looking tired and frail after the overnight flight from London, but refused to comment on his mediation mission other than to say he hoped "we will be useful."

Other mediators were arriving through the day. They were former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Justice H.K. Bhagwati from India, Justice A. Leon Higginbotham from the United States, Paul Keating from Germany, Justice Antonio La Pergola from Italy, and Jean Lapointe from Canada.

Norway, which last year brokered a peace agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Israel, said it was also sending a mediator — Foreign Ministry adviser Tom Vraalsen — at the request of Inkatha and the ANC.

ANC spokeswoman Baleka Kgositsile said the terms of reference for the mediators

had been worked out with Inkatha, but they were being revised due to a decision "that the government should participate as a full partner."

"This has meant that the terms of reference — which have yet to be spelled out in full — are now being looked at by the government, the ANC and Inkatha," she said. Government sources said the government believed it should be a part of the mediation talks, but was "a little bit skeptical about the exercise."

"The government has no problem with a mediation effort if it succeeds in bringing Inkatha back into the election process," a senior source said. It would also welcome an end to the constitutional impasse, in which Inkatha has rejected the interim post-apartheid constitution approved by parliament in December.

But the sources said there would be problems if mediation suggested delays in the elections. There would also be problems if the talks "open up the whole constitutional agreement reached after several years of laborious negotiations."



A group of African National Congress youths, some with home-made guns get ready to fight Inkatha supporters. The clash left one Inkatha supporter dead and another wounded (AFP photo)

Ella Fitzgerald had both legs amputated

LOS ANGELES (R) — Ella Fitzgerald had both of her legs amputated below the knees a year ago, a spokeswoman for the legendary jazz singer said Monday. The spokeswoman, Margaret Nutt, said she did not know why Ms. Fitzgerald, who will be 76 on April 25, was operated on or why it was not announced at the time. "It's old news now. It happened a year ago. Ella is fine. This thing only came up because a New York newspaper, the Daily News, carried a story on it. Our phones have been ringing off the hook ever since," said Ms. Nutt, who works for Ms. Fitzgerald's production company, Salle Productions. Ms. Fitzgerald has been hospitalized on a number of occasions in recent years due to complications from diabetes. She underwent heart bypass surgery in 1986 and had further surgery a year later to remove bone particles in her right foot as part of her diabetes treatment. Ms. Fitzgerald, who was born in Newport News, Virginia, and began her singing career with big bands as a teenager, has recorded more than 250 albums and won 11 Grammy Awards. During the 1940s, American music was in a state of flux, with immensely complicated rhythmic and harmonic turns. The new forms were no problem for Ms. Fitzgerald, with her formidable technique and excellent ear. She developed a style of vocal virtuosity that came to be known as scat-singing, in which she would improvise wordlessly with her voice to give the effect of an instrumental soloist.

Pacino to star as Noriega in new movie

LOS ANGELES (R) — Academy Award-winning actor Al Pacino has signed to star as Panamanian General Manuel Noriega in Oliver Stone's upcoming film, *Noriega*. Warner Bros. Studios announced, The film is due to start shooting in September in Florida and Panama. Pacino won the Oscar for Best Actor in 1993 for his role as a blind retired military officer in *Scent of a Woman*. The *Warrior* Bros. statement said the film will explore the "complicated and unseemly interconnections between government, intelligence services and the criminal underworld." The movie will cover Gen. Noriega's time as Panama's military ruler, when Gen. Noriega maintained a relationship with U.S. intelligence and military services while at the same time serving as an ally to international drug dealers. Gen. Noriega was overthrown by the U.S. military in 1989 and was taken to Miami to face criminal charges. He is serving a prison term for drug trafficking. Oliver Stone has made several controversial movies, including *Salvador*, *Born on the Fourth of July* and most recently, *JFK*, which dealt with conspiracy theories over the assassination of President John Kennedy. A release date for *Noriega* has not yet been set.

Drunk Russian wrecks planes with truck

MOSCOW (R) — A drunken Russian driving a stolen truck severely damaged three airplanes on the tarmac at the Far Eastern airport of Khabarovsk, the daily *Nevskiy* newspaper reported Tuesday. The 55-year-old man broke into the airport at the weekend, jumped into a truck and drove it straight into a row of parked Antonov AN-24 twin-engined turboprop aircraft. "When the hooligan was arrested, he told police he wanted to smash up more aircraft but ran out of time," the paper said.

Fall guy frustrates Hong Kong robbery bid

HONG KONG (R) — Three Chinese teenagers bungled their first robbery attempt in Hong Kong after their local contact fell off the back of a lorry, the local press reported Tuesday. Liu Gaoxiang, 16, Tang Wang, 19, and Xu Weijun, 19, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to robbery at the High Court Monday. Liu was jailed for seven years for possessing a pistol and ammunition while the other two were given six years. The South China Morning Post said. The youths from Shenzhen, a city on the Hong Kong border, admitted the conspiracy. But they said they did not know which jewelry shop they were supposed to rob after their contact fell off from a truck.

After sparking government crisis, Hosokawa seeks mediator role

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, who ignited a bitter power struggle with his sudden resignation, urged Japan's bickering coalition chiefs Tuesday to shelve their feud and choose his successor.

Mr. Hosokawa's shock resignation Friday sparked a struggle to choose the next leader within the unwieldy ruling alliance, polarized into opposing camps led by rival titans Ichiro Ozawa and Masayoshi Takemura, the chief cabinet secretary.

After four days of on-off meetings that have produced no progress, coalition representatives agreed to resume talks Wednesday.

The prime minister, who stepped down amid a growing scandal over his financial dealings in the 1980s, said he now hoped to mediate to help avert a political crisis.

"I would like to do what I can to restore confidence in politics," he said in a speech to business executives.

The prime minister warned

Mr. Ozawa, coalition strategist and head of the influential Shinseitō (Renewal Party), and Mr. Takemura, leader of the New Party Sakigake, that electoral reforms and anti-corruption measures passed in January could be lost as a result of their feud.

"I fear greatly that all of our political reforms will be destroyed as a result," he said.

A government panel was inaugurated Monday with the task of redrawing Japan's electoral map in the next six months. In the event the government falls and parliament is dissolved soon, elections would take place under the current polling system, sound the death knell for the hard-won reforms.

"If all else fails, parliament would have to be dissolved for elections," said political analyst Takashi Tachibana. "In the meantime, a provisional government would take over."

Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata, who is also deputy prime minister, is regarded as a lead-

ing candidate to take over if the coalition manages to paper over policy differences, which have pushed it to the brink four times in as many months.

While alliance leaders jostled for position in the heated negotiations, Mr. Hata too urged conciliation.

"It's true we're caught up in an emotional wrangle, but it's not like the coalition's framework has fallen apart," he told a news conference. "I think we can overcome (our differences) and reach an agreement in talks."

Mr. Hata, a former finance minister with experience in handling tough U.S.-Japan trade issues, is widely seen as the best choice for a post that will require urgent efforts to boost a sagging economy and resolve a trade dispute with Washington.

After days of uncertainty, it appeared clear late Tuesday that Mr. Hata would after all travel to Morocco this week for a global trade meeting, and meet U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor.

Ukrainian parties begin bargaining

KIEV (R) — Bargaining between Ukraine's fragmented political parties started Tuesday after Communists collected more than a quarter of the seats in the country's first post-Soviet parliamentary election.

Unofficial results late Monday gave the Communists and their Socialist and Agrarian allies 124 of the 450 seats, mostly in eastern Ukraine's industrial heartland.

Moderate nationalists, led by the Rukh party which spearheaded Ukraine's drive for independence, got about

60, with their strength lying in central and western Ukraine. The outcome was certain to produce confrontation on ideological and regional lines. Both sides were likely to find allies among the more than 160 deputies listed as independents.

Complex electoral rules left about 120 seats vacant pending new by-elections.

Talks were under way to firm up the alliance between the three left-wing groupings. Rukh had launched informal contacts with a centrist group

led by the country's most popular politician, former Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma.

"Everything was done to destroy these elections, and so this parliament has no clear definition," Rukh leader Vyacheslav Chornovil said.

"The new parliament will be no worse, but it won't be any better. Everything depends on whether politicians start with the economy or politics. If we start with the economy, perhaps we can find some solutions to our problems."

Seoul rejects North's offer for conference

SEOUL (R) — South Korea Tuesday rejected a North Korean offer to hold a conference on reunification of the peninsula, saying the idea would in no way help settle a bitter dispute over Pyongyang's nuclear programme.

Communist North Korea told the South Monday it hoped to deliver letters to political and civic leaders, containing the proposals to hold the conference in Pyongyang or Seoul on April 15, 49th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese rule.

A Unification Ministry spokesman said South Korea would decline to take delivery of the letters by not according to a North Korean request to send liaison officers to the border hamlet of Panmunjom Wednesday.

"The North is again trying to spread propaganda through letters to our nation while avoiding normal South-North dialogue," the spokesman said.

"Our government has decided not to collect the letters, the content of which would in no way help resolve the nuclear issue or improve intra-Korean ties," he said. He said Seoul advised Northern liaison officials by telephone of the decision.

The Seoul government has insisted it is the sole channel for South-North dialogue, and has jailed some South Koreans who have in the past tried to make personal contacts.

The two Koreas have had no border contact since March 18 when the North Korean officials walked out of a meeting

with Southern counterparts, warning that confrontation over Pyongyang's suspected nuclear arms programme could lead to war on the peninsula.

The spokesman said he hoped the North would return to the negotiating table and promptly allow inspections of its suspected nuclear sites.

South Korea's domestic Yonhap News Agency said Tuesday China was expected to brief South Korea on its efforts to settle the row over North Korea's nuclear programme during working-level talks this week in Beijing.

China, North Korea's sole remaining major ally, is considered pivotal to resolving the impasse with Pyongyang, which has resisted international calls to allow full inspection of its nuclear sites.

Clintons pay \$14,615 in back taxes, interest

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary paid \$14,615 in back taxes and interest Monday after their aides and lawyers discovered unreported income from commodities investments in 1980, officials said.

At a White House briefing, the Clintons' personal attorney told reporters the president and first lady had failed to report a capital gain of \$6,498 from 1980 commodities trading by Mrs. Clinton.

"The federal tax on this gain would have been \$3,315. The state tax would have been \$14. But the interest over the past 14 years added up to \$10,134 and \$652, respectively, "dwarfing" the tax itself, Kendall said.

"The Clintons are today paying these taxes plus accrued interest," Mr. Kendall said. "The Clintons do not know

how the error occurred but accept responsibility for it," he added.

A source familiar with the records who requested anonymity said he thought the capital gain had simply been "overlooked" by the Clintons at the time it happened.

Mrs. Clinton earned nearly \$100,000 on an initial \$1,000 investment in one of her accounts in the commodities market in the late 1970s, while her husband was attorney general, then governor of Arkansas.

That highly successful account was with the Springfield, Arkansas, office of commodity brokerage firm Ray E. Friedman and Co., also known as REFCO.

She made the unreported \$6,498 gain in an account run by Stephens Inc. of Little Rock, the source familiar with the

records said. Her initial investment with Stephens was \$5,000, and Stephens initiated trades with three commodities brokers.

Figuring the losses and the gains from all three brokers, she closed the Stephens account with \$10,489 in May 1980.

Mrs. Clinton's commodities trading came to light last month because of the investigation into other business dealings she and her husband had in the Whitewater land deal in Arkansas.

No one has accused the first lady of any legal wrongdoing, but many were stunned by her gains in the markets.

The White House said last month that Mrs. Clinton left the market because she found it too nerve-racking after she became pregnant.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia, U.S.-plan joint exercises

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian and American troops will hold joint military exercises on Russian soil for the first time ever this summer, officials said Monday. The exercises, involving 250 officers and soldiers on each side, will last about one week in July and help prepare for future United Nations peacekeeping operations, Russian Defence Ministry spokesman Vyacheslav Sedov said. They will be held near the town of Tyotshyev, 700 kilometres east of Moscow. The site was used for a 1954 above-ground nuclear test involving Soviet army servicemen, but Mr. Sedov said the level of radiation is not dangerous. The troops will come from Russia's 27th Motorized Rifle Division and the U.S. army's 3rd Infantry Division, he added. "There will be no mock combat, since it is not called for by the peacekeepers' mandate, and they will not shoot a single live round," Mr. Sedov said. Ultra-nationalist legislator Vladimir Zhirinovskiy said in parliament last week that the exercises might culminate in an "occupation" of Russian territory by "foreign troops." "The generals who organise joint military exercises with NATO will lose all their stars when the regime changes," he threatened. But Maj.-Gen. Anatoly Sloyakin, commander of the 27th Division, told the ITAR-TASS news agency that the goal of the exercise is "learning to seek political solutions to conflicts."

Bonn's Free Democrats to stay with Kohl

BERLIN (R) — The Free Democrats, threatened with the loss of their balancing role in Germany's coalition politics, ended the suspense by announcing Monday they will stay with Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats. The Free Democrats previously had fended off pleas from Mr. Kohl's conservatives that they lay out their cards well in advance of the Oct. 16 national elections. The centrist party has fared poorly in local and state elections, and could be wiped out as a national force if it does not get the minimum 5 per cent required for seats in parliament. The coalition has functioned well, Klaus Kinkel, the Free Democrats' leader and foreign minister, said in Bonn after a meeting of the party leadership. "This coalition should continue to work in the interests of Germany," Mr. Kinkel said. The decision, made public four months earlier than expected, will disappoint opposition leader Rudolf Scharping, currently in Washington to meet President Bill Clinton during a get-acquainted tour.

Grachev: 1,349 soldiers died last year

MOSCOW (AP) — More than 1,300 Russian soldiers died last year, about half of them in car crashes and other accidents, according to Defence Minister Pavel Grachev. One-fourth of the deaths were classified as suicides, and one of every five occurred during maintenance of military equipment, Gen. Grachev said on television Monday night. Twenty-seven deaths — two per cent of the 1,349 reported last year — were the result of hazing by fellow soldiers, Mr. Grachev said. The high number of peacetime deaths has provoked protest from soldiers' families, including an organisation of soldiers' mothers that has demanded improvements in safety, training and health care. Gen. Grachev answered questions on a TV talk show hosted by Russian journalist Vladimir Posner. The defence minister described pacifism as an "anti-state" activity, noting that 18 months of army service as a legal obligation for men, Russia had about 2.3 million soldiers at the end of 1993 and has announced plans to reduce the armed forces to 2.1 million by the end of this year. The former Soviet army had about 3.7 million soldiers. Gen. Grachev said 26,500 women are serving in the Russian military.

France warns Zhirinovskiy

PARIS (R) — France said Tuesday that Russian ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy had made "unacceptable statements" on a visit to Strasbourg and warned him against any repetition. But the Foreign Ministry stopped short of expelling him for violating the terms of his visa to attend the Council of Europe parliamentary assembly, where he called Monday for Russia to bomb NATO bases in Italy in retaliation for air strikes on Bosnian Serbs. "The statements of Mr. Zhirinovskiy are unacceptable and he has again been warned to abstain from such statements," Foreign Ministry spokesman Richard Duque told reporters. Asked if Mr. Zhirinovskiy would be expelled if he made further inflammatory statements, Mr. Duque replied: "I have nothing to add."

3 Westerners abducted in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH (R) — Two Britons and an Australian living in Cambodia have been abducted by unidentified gunmen in South of the country, police and diplomats said Tuesday. "They were taken from their car — hounded off — and their taxi driver sent on his way," a British embassy spokesman said. He denied reports that a \$10,000 ransom demand had been made for three, two women and a man all aged around 30. The three are managers of the popular Cafe Rendezvous restaurant and were returning to Sihanoukville with food and provisions for the Khmer New Year holiday, one of their friends told Reuters. Police Major-General Kuy Yary, head of the National Security Ministry's Radio Communications Department, confirmed unidentified gunmen had stopped the taxi. "For the time being we only understand that they (abductors) are a group of gunmen. We've sent our forces to investigate this incident," he told Reuters. "On April 11, they (the foreigners) left Phnom Penh for Sihanoukville by taxi. When the taxi reached Sre Ambel district at about 5.30 pm a group of gunmen appeared on the road and stopped the taxi." "They forced the three foreigners to get out and let the taxi go on," he said.

U.S. sends home MIA remains

HANOI (R) — The U.S. military sent home Tuesday nine more sets of remains believed to be those of servicemen killed in the Vietnam War, and said Vietnamese cooperation in the search for American war dead had improved since the economic embargo was lifted. Nine wooden boxes of fragments — five discovered by joint U.S.-Vietnamese search teams at crash and burial sites and four handed in by Vietnamese villagers — were placed in metal caskets and loaded into a U.S. Air Force C-141 transport plane. The remains will be flown to Hawaii, where military forensic and dental experts will examine them to try to make a positive identification. They were turned up by eight teams that investigated more than 60 MIA cases and excavated 12 burial or crash sites during the most recent search, which ended on March 22. The search was the first since U.S. President Bill Clinton lifted the 30-year-old U.S. economic embargo against Hanoi in early February.

13 people die in Russia floods

MOSCOW (AP) — Spring floods caused by melting snow have killed at least 13 people and wreaked enormous damage on villages and crops in central and southern Russia, officials said Tuesday. "It is hard to assess the full damage, and the floods are still moving north," said Anatoly Streltsov, spokesman for the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the government body that copes with natural disasters. Flooding has taken 10 lives in the southern province of Kalmykia and another in the Penza region of central Russia, he said. In Penza Alone, swollen rivers inundated 15 towns and villages as well as 5,630 hectares (13,960 acres) of farmland. In the Volgograd region in the south east, the Volga River and its tributaries have flooded about 500 square kilometres (193 square miles), washing out 51 kilometres (32 miles) of highways and 53 bridges. Mr. Streltsov blamed local authorities for failing to take precautionary measures after an unusually snowy winter. "There was between 50 and 70 per cent more snow than usual in winter," he said. "But no one did anything until our ministry raised really serious alarm."

China cracks down on secrets smugglers

HONG KONG (R) — Chinese authorities in the southern city of Shenzhen are cracking down on smuggling state economic secrets to neighbouring Hong Kong, a Beijing-funded news agency reported Tuesday. Customs officials reported 20 cases of tourists trying to leave China with a total of more than 100 classified documents in their luggage between January and March this year, the Hong Kong China News Agency said. And Hong Kong customs officials passed on 49 cases of official document smuggling to Shenzhen authorities last year, an increase of 100 per cent on the year before, the report said. It said those caught were mostly Chinese citizens seeking to sell the documents to foreign businesses and Hong Kong public servants. The documents usually contained trade and economic information classified as secret by the state.

Russian troops clash with Tajik rebels

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan (AP) — Russian Border Guards exchanged fire Monday with guerrillas trying to cross the border from Afghanistan and detained one Tajik rebel, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported. In three separate incidents along the border, the Russian repulsed attackers who fled back into Afghanistan, the news service said. There were no reports of injuries or deaths. Thousands of Russian soldiers are patrolling the border in Tajikistan, an impoverished, mountainous former Soviet republic in Central Asia that has been torn by civil war. A coalition of Islamic nationalist and self-proclaimed democratic forces has battled the former Communists who lead Tajikistan. The fighting has killed about 20,000 people and left 500,000 refugees.

U.K. police find remains of woman

GLOUCESTER, England (AP) — Human remains found in a field near a former home of an alleged serial killer are the bones of a woman, police said Monday. The remains were discovered Sunday by police who have been digging for nearly two weeks in the field in Kempeley, 10 miles (16 km) south of the Gloucester home of accused murderer Frederick West. The bodies of nine women were exhumed from Mr. West's house and garden. The 52-year-old house builder is charged with murdering nine women, whose ages ranged from 15 to 21, over a 14-year period up to 1987. The last victim was said to be his daughter Heather, who was 16 when she vanished in May 1987. Digging at the field was suspended after the remains were found so a government pathologist could examine the site. The field is just over a mile (1.6 km) from the small village of Much Marcle, Mr. West's childhood home. Mr. West and his first wife, Catherine Costello, began their married life in Much Marcle.

Australia to double aid to Vietnam

HANOI (AP) — Australia and Vietnam have agreed that a group led by members of Australia's parliament will visit Hanoi in July to inquire about human rights and other issues. Prime Minister Paul Keating announced Monday. Australia also will double its aid to Vietnam to \$144 million over the next four years, Mr. Keating said. In a speech prepared for a banquet Monday night given by his Vietnamese counterpart, Vo Van Kiet, Mr. Keating said he was very pleased that the two countries have worked out the details of the July visit. He met separately earlier with Mr. Kiet and President Le Duc Anh. The meetings were closed to reporters.

Orlando's three-point barrage thwarts Knicks

NEW YORK (R) — Nick Anderson scored a season-high 36 points as the Orlando Magic used a 3-point barrage to thwart the New York Knicks 108-100 Monday.

"Tonight was one of the best basketball games I have ever been involved in," said Anderson, who made six 3-pointers. Orlando connected on 11 from long distance in winning its fourth straight game. The teams combined for an NBA record 47 attempts from 3-point range.

New York, which failed in its third straight attempt to clinch the Atlantic Division title and fell into a tie with Atlanta for best record in the Eastern Conference at 52-23, was led by Patrick Ewing, who scored 22 points and grabbed 18 rebounds.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 23 points and Arnette Hardaway added 20 for the Magic, who closed to within six games of the first-place Knicks with seven games to play.

The Knicks, who trailed by as many as 10 points, used a 12-3 spurt to close to within 103-100 with 1:20 remaining but could get no closer. In Charlotte, Dell Curry scored 14 of his 21 points in a decisive 16-4 run spanning the third and fourth quarters to lead the Hornets past the Miami Heat 99-97.

Alonzo Mourning scored 19 points and Larry Johnson had 15 points, eight rebounds and eight assists for the Hornets, who have won four straight and closed within 3 1/2 games of Miami in the race for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot.

spot.

John Salley scored 21 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for the Heat, who have dropped nine of their last 12 games.

At Indiana, Rik Smits had a season-high 32 points to lead the Pacers to a 121-108 victory over the Boston Celtics.

Smits shot 12-for-19 from the field as the Pacers swept their four-game season series against the Celtics for the first time in franchise history.

Indiana moved into a tie with the Nets for sixth place in the Eastern Conference, half a game ahead of Miami.

Reggie Miller scored 22 points for Indiana and Derrick McKey added 19.

Dee Brown led Boston with 23 points, Sherman Douglas had 19 points and 13 rebounds and Dico Radja added 19 points.

In San Antonio, David Robinson scored 29 points and pulled down 11 rebounds as the Spurs snapped a three-game losing streak, defeating the Minnesota Timberwolves 101-89.

Willie Anderson added 23 points and eight assists for the Spurs, who pulled to within two games of first-place Houston in the Midwest Division.

Dennis Rodman went scoreless but grabbed 16 rebounds. Doug West netted 16 points and Isiah Rider added 15 for Minnesota, which lost its third straight.

At Golden State, Latrell Sprewell scored 33 points to lead seven players in double figures as the Warriors cruised past the Dallas Mavericks 122-108.

NBA standings after games played Monday (tabulate under won, lost, winning percentage and games behind):

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
★ New York	52	23	.693	—
★ Orlando	46	29	.613	6
New Jersey	40	35	.533	12
Miami	40	36	.526	12 1/2
Boston	28	47	.373	24
Philadelphia	23	52	.307	29
Washington	22	53	.293	30

Central Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
★ Atlanta	52	23	.693	—
★ Chicago	51	24	.680	1
Cleveland	42	33	.560	10
Indiana	40	35	.533	12
Charlotte	36	39	.480	16
Detroit	20	54	.270	31 1/2
Milwaukee	19	55	.257	32 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Y Houston	54	20	.730	—
★ San Antonio	53	23	.697	2
★ Utah	47	28	.627	7 1/2
Denver	37	37	.500	17
Minnesota	20	55	.267	34 1/2
Dallas	9	66	.120	45 1/2

Pacific Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Y Seattle	57	18	.760	—
★ Phoenix	49	26	.653	8
★ Portland	45	30	.600	12
★ Golden State	44	31	.587	13
LA Lakers	33	41	.446	23 1/2
Clippers	26	49	.347	31
Sacramento	26	49	.347	31

★ - Clinched playoff spot
Y - Clinched division title

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TANIAH HIRSCH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K1097 ♠52 ♠AK542 ♠7
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South West
1 ♠ 1 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?
- Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠KQ ♠97542 ♠A653
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?
- Q.3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠KQ ♠97542 ♠A653
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
3 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?
- Q.4—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠75 ♠9 ♠85 ♠AK10852
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ 1 ♠ ?
What action do you take?
- Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠AQ1063 ♠872 ♠Q96
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?
- Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K43 ♠A82 ♠J54 ♠J96
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
3 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?



World squash champion Jansher Khan holds the cup after his 3-1 victory over Australia's Brett Martin Monday, his third British Open win. The games ran 9-1, 9-0, 9-10 and 9-1 (AFP photo)

Reneberg advances at Alabama championship

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama (R) — Third-seeded American Richey Reneberg, the highest seed in action at the \$300,000 U.S. clay court championships, advanced easily to the second round Monday.

Reneberg, ranked 36th, defeated fellow American Chris Woodruff, the 1993 U.S. collegiate champion, 6-1, 6-2.

Fourth-seeded Jason Stoltenberg of Australia beat unseeded American Alex O'Brien, another former collegiate champion, 6-2, 6-4.

Luiz Mattar of Brazil was the only seed to be upset, going out to Argentinean Daniel Orsanic 6-3, 7-5.

Top seeds Malival Washington of the United States and Mikael Pernfors of Sweden were due to play their first-

round matches late Tuesday. Washington, the top seed and ranked 31st, will face unseeded American David Witt, ranked 189th, and Pernfors will play Brazilian qualifier Roberto Jabali, ranked 173rd.

Woodruff, who turned professional last August, made too many easy errors against Reneberg and missed chances to keep things close in the second set after breaking Reneberg to square the score at 2-2.

The steady Reneberg rallied consistently to win the next four games and took the match with a forehand winner.

"When he had to finish the point he made a few errors," Reneberg said of his 21-year-old opponent. "I thought he let me off the hook a lot."

Wimbledon raising money for court improvements

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — The All England Club launched a fund-raising plan Monday to help pay for a new No. 1 court stadium and other facility improvements at the Wimbledon tennis championships.

The club said it is issuing a new series of debentures in a bid to raise £35.7 million (\$53.55 million) for the No. 1 court, a link road between Somerset and Church roads, two new grass courts and a new facilities building for players and media.

The 2,100 debentures, for the period 1996-2000, will cost £19,250 (\$28,875) each and will be offered first to existing holders. Privileges include one centre court ticket per debenture for the five-year period and use of a special lounge.

Wimbledon pioneered the concept of sporting debentures in 1992 to finance the purchase of new land. Since then, the debentures have paid for other construction and facility improvements.

"Debenture funds have played an important part in making Wimbledon what it is today, and the continuing investment of debenture holders will ensure that Wimbledon remains the best tournament in the world," said All England Club Chairman John Curry.

Wimbledon announced its capital projects last March as part of a 20-year master plan. The centerpiece is the new court one stadium to be built north of centre court in Aorangi Park with seating for 11,500 people.

Krajicek to lead Dutch against U.S.

ROTTERDAM (R) — Richard Krajicek will lead the Dutch in the Davis Cup world group quarter-final tie against the United States in July, officials said Tuesday.

The big-serving 22-year-old, who missed last month's first-round tie against Belgium, returned from a long lay-off with a knee injury to win the Spanish Open title last week.

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Rovers beats Villa, draws level on points with United

BLACKBURN, England (AP) — Alan Shearer's 33rd goal of the season pushed Blackburn Rovers up to level on points with standings leader Manchester United late Monday in a 1-0 victory over league cup holder Aston Villa.

Shearer's 10th minute strike means that defending titlist United, once 16 points ahead of the field, now leads Rovers only on goal difference. Both have 79 points although United has six games to play to Rovers' five.

The only goal of a high-quality game at Ewood Park came after good approach work from Rovers' Jason Wilcox and Mike Newell. Newell headed Wilcox's centre down into Shearer's path and the England striker controlled it on his thigh before shooting past Villa's Australian goalie Mark Bosnich from six metres.

Bosnich had earlier made a stunning, one-handed save to turn away a 20-metre shot from Tim Sherwood as Rovers posed early problems for the visitor.

Rovers continued to play some slick flowing soccer in the first half but Villa, who reshaped the team after taking off injured Welsh striker Dean Saunders at half time, looked more impressive after the break.

Four minutes the interval, Rovers' England goalie Tim Flowers had to make a diving, one-handed save to foil Graham Fenton and Villa continued to attack the home team impressively.

In the last 15 minutes, however, Rovers stepped up the pace again and one substitute, Paul Warhurst, set up a chance for another, Alan Wright, who fired a metre wide with only Bosnich to beat.



Blackburn striker Jason Wilcox (left) evades Aston Villa's Ugo Ehiogu during their premier league match at Ewood Park Monday (AFP photo)

The result means Rovers can now contest United's title charge from almost on level terms.

At one stage, Manchester United was on course for a triple domestic triumph, leading the league standings by 16 points and seemingly headed for Wembley in both cup competitions.

But Villa defeated the Reds 2-0 in the league up final March 27 and United must replay a Football Association Cup semifinal against Oldham Wednesday after gaining a 1-1 tie thanks to a goal in the last minute of overtime.

Venables picks squad

Meanwhile, England soccer coach Terry Venables named a squad for a game that is no longer taking place.

Although the April 20 game against Germany has been called off because of fears of violence, Venables is calling the squad together for a training session.

England should have played Germany in Berlin on that date. But the English Football Association pulled out of the game, which would have been played on the anniversary of Hitler's birthday, because of fears of clashes between neo-Nazis and leftist radicals.

Instead, Venables said, 24 England players will gather for two days training.

"We wanted to maximise the setback of losing a game," Venables said Monday. "There are players you feel will be good at international level but you don't know until you try them. It will give me the chance to get to know these

players in this sort of situation. "It will be very light training and we may end up with a little game, one part of the squad against the other," Venables said.

Lazio midfielder Paul Gascoigne has been ruled out because of a double leg fracture and Venables cannot call upon any Arsenal players because they are in league action against Wimbledon.

But he has called up Liverpool's Neil Ruddock and Jamie Redknapp, Oldham defender Richard Johnson, Newcastle's Robert Lee and Chris Bart-Williams of Sheffield Wednesday, Manchester City goalie Tony Cotton, Chelsea midfielder Denis Wise, Jason Wilcox of Blackburn, Norwich striker Chris Sutton and Newcastle's Andy Cole, top scorer in the premier league with 38 goals.

Gustaffson out of Nice tournament

NICE, France (AP) — Magnus Gustaffson of Sweden, the No. 3 seeded player of the \$300,000 Nice Open Men's tennis tournament, lost in the first round of Frenchman Thierry Guadalupe, 6-7, (3-7), 6-4, 6-2 Monday.

Guadalupe, ranked 198th in the world, received a wild card invitation to enter the tournament. Gustaffson was ranked No. 11 in the latest tour list.

"I don't know what happened today," Gustaffson said. "My mind wasn't there. Everything was off — my serve, my forehand."

No. 7 seeded Wayne Ferreira of South Africa advanced with a 7-5, 6-1 victory over Richard Fromberg of Australia.

In other first-round matches, Andrei Cherkov of Russia, the 1989 winner here, beat Jaime Yzaga of Peru, 6-0, 6-3; Jonas Svensson of Sweden, eliminated Rodolphe Gilbert of France, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4; Slava Dosedila of the Czech Republic defeated Marcos Ondruska of South Africa, 7-6 (7-2), 1-6, 7-5 and qualifier Emilio Alvarez of Spain topped Gilbert Schaller of Austria, 7-6 (8-6), 7-6 (7-4).

The top two players of the tournament, Stefan Edberg and Jim Courier, were to begin their first-round action late Tuesday.

Horse racing triumphs and tragedies recalled at museum

NEWMARKET, England (R) — From the skeleton of champion sire Eclipse to the pistol used by jockey Fred Archer to kill himself, Britain's Horse Racing Museum vividly recalls four centuries of sporting history.

Crushing losses and crowning victories are recorded here, scandals are relived, fairy tale endings remembered. For the racing buff, it offers the perfect trip down memory lane.

The "sport of kings" which attracts so many larger-than-life characters is brought to life by a video history of its stars and a computer for gamblers to check the past form of their favourite champions.

Grainy old newsreel shows Persimmon winning the 1896 Derby for King Edward VII in the first horse race ever recorded on film and legendary jockey Lester Piggott is recalled in glorious technicolour virtually lifting Roberto over the line to win the race in 1972.

The museum's setting could not be bettered. It is housed in the old subscription rooms of the sport's ruling body, the Jockey Club, where 19th century gentlemen came to settle their gambling debts in Newmarket, headquarters of British racing.

The Jockey Club let the privately-run museum have the premises for an annual peppercorn rent of just one pound sterling (\$1.5) and it now attracts 25,000 visitors a year from more than 40 countries.

Museum director John Round-Turner names the skeleton of Eclipse as its finest exhibit.

"We are very proud of the skeleton. Eighty-five per cent of all horses racing today are descended from Eclipse," he said on a tour of the museum.

The unbeaten colt, foaled in 1764, is one of the founding fathers of the modern thoroughbred and sired the winners of 862 races.

He proudly points out the stuffed head of Persimmon, saying: "That is a beautiful piece of taxidermy."

Also on display is the tail of the French-born Gladiateur who won the 1865 Epsom Derby. "The French Jockey Club sent it to their English counterparts, saying this was the only part of the horse the English would recognise," he said.

Constantly echoing through the museum galleries is the incongruous sound of the racing video with plummy-voiced commentators from the British movie news reliving great races.

DEADSEA

REBECUE

The Marriott DeadSea Barbecue

The Dead Sea comes to life on Thursday, April 14th, for a night of non-stop fun and entertainment!

Come to the bar, out on the beach. Get ready to dance, to sing, to laugh, and don't be surprised when you bring back one or more lucky prizes. We've got a lot in store for you.

Tickets are available at the Amman Marriott Hotel for JD 35 inclusive of drinks and transport to and from the Marriott. Departure from the hotel at 8:30 pm.

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Cinema	Tel.: 634144	Cinema	Tel.: 699238	Cinema	Tel.: 677420	Cinema	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Cinema	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hisham's	Tel.: 625155
PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		AMMOUN THEATRE		Nabil Al Mashini Theatre		AHLAN THEATRE	
Marlon Brando in The Freshman Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Robby Benson & Jennifer O'Neil in INVASION OF PRIVACY Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		CONCORD '1' DRACULA Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' FOREVER YOUNG Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Opening Soon A political comedy Forbidden X Forbidden		Look out for the surprise in the coming play		Two more weeks before the performances of the political comedy "Ahlan Arab Summit Conference" Come to an end	

NEWS IN BRIEF

Senior Kuwaiti MP attacks government

KUWAIT (R) — A senior Kuwaiti member of parliament in remarks published on Tuesday attacked the government for not consulting parliament about an impending cabinet reshuffle and said this showed the country's recently revived democracy had no future. "It seems that the individualistic method of running the affairs of this country is still the most preferred method for the leadership," Hamad Al Jouan was quoted as saying by the English-language Arab Times. "For this reason I see no future for democracy in this country," said Mr. Jouan, the respected head of the National Assembly's legal and legislative affairs committee. The cabinet submitted its resignation on Saturday following an announcement by Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah on April 4 that he would reshuffle the cabinet to introduce a new era of reform. Sheikh Saad has not said when he would implement the reshuffle but it is expected within the next 10 days. MPs suspect Sheikh Saad wants a cabinet more closely aligned to the ruling Sabah family and less susceptible to influence by an aggressive National Assembly dominated by its critics. Kuwait, whose lively parliamentary tradition is unmatched elsewhere on the Arabian Peninsula, revived the National Assembly in 1992 after six-year break, fulfilling a pledge given by exiled leaders during Iraq's 1990-91 occupation. Some MPs have said lack of consultation about the reshuffle could precipitate a showdown between government and assembly.

Lebanon to ask France to hand over Aoun

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon will ask France to hand over exiled Christian leader Michel Aoun to be tried for war crimes, a government minister was quoted on Tuesday as saying. "For sure Lebanon will present the issue of bringing back Aoun to put him on trial for the crimes he committed before he left," Labour Minister Abdullah Al Amin told the London-based Al Hayat daily in an interview in Cairo. "If France refuses, then a dark future awaits relations between us," said Mr. Amin, adding that the matter will be discussed by the Beirut cabinet soon. The Christian general and former Lebanese army commander waged a "war of liberation" in 1989, fighting militias backed by Syria and its 35,000 troops in Lebanon. In 1990 Gen. Aoun's army units fought a Christian militia in a feud in which more than 1,000 people died before he was overthrown and ousted from the presidential palace in a Syrian-led blitz that signalled the end of Lebanon's 15-year civil war. Gen. Aoun was amnestied and went into exile in France in 1991 for five years under an agreement between Beirut and Paris banning him from political activities and making political statements. However, Gen. Aoun has issued several statements from France criticising the Syrian-backed government that have been carried by the Lebanese media. He remains popular with many Lebanese Christians who oppose Syria's presence in the country.

'Iran needs better films, television'

NICOSIA (R) — Iran needs to make better films, radio and television programmes to fight what it sees as a Western cultural invasion, the Tehran Times said on Tuesday. "The long-term and logical way to combat cultural invasion is to improve domestic production of films and radio and television programmes, thereby removing the incentive to watch Western products," the official IRNA news agency reported in an editorial. The spread of privately-owned satellite dishes in countries like Iran is being used by the West to "gradually and subtly dilute non-Western cultures and change the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Third World," the paper said. Iranian Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati was quoted by local newspapers on Sunday as saying satellite dishes, which have mushroomed on Iranian rooftops over the last two years, should be regulated but were not illegal. A week earlier he was reported as saying the dishes were banned and would be confiscated by the police. The Tehran Times argued on Tuesday that as satellite dishes were becoming ever smaller and easier to hide, trying to seize all of them could not succeed in stopping Iranians watching Western broadcasts. IRAN's government appointed a new radio and TV chief, Ali Larijani, in February in a move widely seen as a concession to conservative Muslim clerics concerned at growing airtime given to Western films and music. The previous man in the post, the brother of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, had been seen as trying to widen the appeal of Iranian broadcasting away from religious affairs and drama programmes on the achievements of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

U.S. seeks security from attacks in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — The U.S. embassy in Ankara has asked Turkey for better protection after Sunday's attack on its premises by militants, a Turkish Foreign Ministry official said on Tuesday. "They have requested heightened security for their buildings and asked indemnity for damages to the embassy building which we have of course accepted," the official told Reuters. Thousands of extremists demonstrated in Ankara, Istanbul and other big cities in protest against Serbian attacks on the Muslim town of Gorazde in Bosnia. Protesters in Ankara stoned U.N. and U.S. missions. A group entered the embassy compound, smashing windows and hung a Turkish flag on the door. The demonstrations followed exaggerated reports by private television stations that thousands of Muslims had died in Gorazde from Serbian chemical attacks. Prosecutors on Monday filed charges against the Interstar and TGRT networks for inciting the public with false news and calling for unauthorised demonstrations. The protesters, many in black robes and waving placards in Arabic script, defied police calls to disperse and shouted anti-secular slogans.

Editor of Sudanese newspaper arrested

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudanese authorities have detained the publisher and editor of Al Sudan Al Douia newspaper closed down by the government early this month. The official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) on Tuesday quoted Culture and Information Minister Abdul Basit Sabdrat as saying Mahjoub Erwa was arrested at Khartoum airport. It did not say whether Mr. Erwa, a member of parliament, was entering or leaving the country or when he was arrested. Mr. Sabdrat told state television on Monday that one of the documents seized with Mr. Erwa indicated that the paper had requested financing from a "hostile" foreign country. He did not name the country. The government closed down the newspaper alleging that it wanted to make the public lose confidence in the government of Omar Hassan Al Bashir.

Rebels sabotage power line to north Iraq

ANKARA (AP) — Kurdish rebels attacked a power line tower in northern Iraq only a few days after Turkey began supplying electricity across the border for free, an Iraqi Kurdish spokesman said Monday. The Sunday attack left some areas out of power, said Safien Dizayhe, the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party representative in Ankara. "We strongly condemn the attack which is not serving to anybody's interest," Mr. Dizayhe told the Associated Press. The Iraqi Kurds — who have ruled an autonomous region in northern Iraq since the Gulf war — depend on Turkey for aid and have begun to distance themselves from separatist Kurds in Turkey. Turkey started providing 20 megawatts of electricity worth \$16,000 daily to the Dohuk region on Wednesday. Turkey also allows a U.S.-led air force use its bases to monitor Baghdad's treatment of Iraqi Kurds. A Turkish government official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Turkey would resume power supply to northern Iraq once repairs are done. Turkish Kurdish guerrillas have been fighting for autonomy in southern Turkey since 1984. More than 12,000 people have been killed in the unrest.

Yeltsin says worst is over in Russia

MADRID (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, addressing the Spanish parliament, said on Tuesday the hardest part of Russia's transition to democracy and a market economy was over. But he added that "huge moral, intellectual and physical efforts" were still needed to overcome what he called "the vices of the past."

Mr. Yeltsin, who later met Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, was on the second day of his first visit to the West since he crushed an armed rebellion by supporters of the old conservative parliament in Moscow last October. The visit ends on Wednesday.

Hailing Spain's success in shunning off totalitarian rule and establishing democracy after the death of dictator Francisco Franco in 1975, he said in his speech to parliament: "Something similar is now happening in Russia. Russia has passed the first, most difficult part of this route."

"The main thing which has been proven is that the stamina of the Russian people has not been exhausted," he said.

The first day of Mr. Yeltsin's visit, which concluded with a state banquet hosted by King Juan Carlos on Monday night, was clouded by a row between Russia and the West over two Western air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces near the town of Gorazde.

Mr. Yeltsin, in a phone call to President Bill Clinton before leaving Moscow, complained that Russia had not been consulted.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, in Madrid with Mr. Yeltsin, told reporters the air strikes could prolong the war in Bosnia rather than end it, calling it "a big mistake and a great risk" to take military action without

consulting Russia.

The situation in the former Yugoslavia was certain to be one of the major topics of Mr. Yeltsin's meeting with Mr. Gonzalez, which lasted nearly 90 minutes at the Spanish leader's office in the Moncloa Palace in Madrid.

Mr. Gonzalez told Mr. Yeltsin at an initial meeting on Monday that Spain backed the air strikes which "complied rigorously with United Nations Security Council agreements," but he also said a system of prior consultation was desirable.

After their talks, Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Yeltsin were due to sign a treaty of friendship and cooperation, aimed at giving new life to bilateral relations which Spanish officials have characterised as cordial but lacklustre.

The two countries were also signing a commercial accord which would provide for Spanish refinancing of Russia's current debt to Madrid of \$425 million over the next four years and include further credits for a possible \$200 million for Russia to buy Spanish goods and services.

Mr. Kozyrev and Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana on Monday signed five agreements aimed to boost cooperation in education, culture, environmental and social affairs.

Mr. Yeltsin's visit is widely seen in the West as a test of the Russian leader's health and his ability to withstand political pressures from hardline opponents at home.

The president, who is 63, looked well and at ease as he began his second day of engagement by laying a wreath at the memorial to Spain's war dead and receiving the keys to the city from the mayor of Madrid.

Mitchell quits U.S. Supreme Court race

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Senate majority leader George Mitchell bowed out of consideration for the U.S. Supreme Court Tuesday even though he said President Bill Clinton had told him the nomination was his if he wanted it.

Mr. Mitchell said he had concluded his being named could put passage of health care reform and other major Clinton administration and Democratic initiatives at risk, officials said.

Mr. Mitchell said he made his decision Monday afternoon and then had an hourlong meeting with Mr. Clinton at the White House to convey his decision.

"He told me that he wanted to appoint me to the court, that he intended to appoint me to the court but that he was as concerned as I was about the prospect that the nomination would affect my ability to serve a majority leader for the rest of the session," Mr. Mitchell told reporters.

He said Mr. Clinton "reluctantly accepted" his assessment that he could not steer health care and other Clinton priorities through Congress while undergoing the court confirmation process.

Mr. Mitchell was asked if he

would want to be appointed to chief justice if William Rehnquist retired from that position. Mr. Mitchell said he had no inkling Mr. Rehnquist had any plans to step down, but said "if the president tells me that he wants to nominate me I will consider it at that time."

Mr. Mitchell, 60, a liberal Maine Democrat and fiercely partisan majority leader, already had announced he will not seek reelection this fall. He also is said to be a top candidate for the vacancy as commissioner of major league baseball.

In withdrawing from consideration for the court post, Mr. Mitchell said he had concluded that Congress had a "rare opportunity" to enact "comprehensive, meaningful health care reform and I don't want to do anything to detract from that."

In addition to Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Clinton's list of prospects is said to include U.S. District Judge Jose Cabranes of Connecticut and Solicitor General Drew S. Days III. Also, the list includes at least three federal appeals justices, Amalya Kearse of New York, Stephen Breyer of Boston and Richard Arnold of Little Rock, a longtime Clinton friend.

Hrawi regrets postponement of Pope's visit to Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon is still looking forward to a visit by Pope John Paul II despite the Vatican's postponement of a late spring papal pilgrimage, President Elias Hrawi said Tuesday.

"I regret the postponement," Mr. Hrawi said in a statement, a day after the Vatican said the Pope put off indefinitely a trip to Lebanon because of "grave events" in the Middle Eastern country.

"Lebanon, which has established a lasting peace, awaits the holy Pope's trip any time... I hope the new date would be before long," said Mr. Hrawi, a Maronite Catholic.

Although the Vatican had never announced a date for the visit, it was widely expected that the Pope would be coming at the end of May. But reports that a postponement was being considered because of security concerns surfaced in the local press in recent days.

Tension has increased in Beirut this year, disturbing the peace it has enjoyed since the end of the 1975-90 civil war.

It climaxed with a Feb. 27 bomb explosion that killed 10 worshippers and wounded 60 at a Maronite Catholic church in the Christian heartland, an area north of Beirut which is

Lebanon's image is hurt, page 2



FURY: Russian ultranationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy hurls potted flowers over the fence of the Russian consulate in Strasbourg at Jewish demonstrators protesting his visit to France. The French government said Tuesday it had warned Mr. Zhirinovskiy to restrain himself during the rest of his stay in France, where he is confined to Strasbourg and participation in the spring session of the European Council assembly (see page 8) (AFP photo)

Algerian press sees hope for dialogue with Islamists

TUNIS (R) — The Algerian press speculated on Tuesday that the choice of Mokdad Sifi as new prime minister could be a signal from President Liamine Zeroual that he is serious about dialogue with his opponents.

Mr. Sifi, described by one newspaper as the "president's man," replaced hardliner Redha Malek as prime minister on Monday.

Mr. Malek was known to oppose Mr. Zeroual's policy of negotiation with the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) which is seeking to establish an Islamic state in Algeria (see page 2).

The usually well-informed newspaper Al Watan said in an editorial that Mr. Malek, an old school diplomat and an outspoken anti-Islamist, might have been sacked because of ideological disputes with the president.

"President Liamine Zeroual's action is perhaps designed to centralise decision-making in order to pursue dialogue with the fundamentalists of the FIS," Al Watan said.

Several newspapers noted that Mr. Zeroual and Mr. Sifi were of the same generation — both are 53 years old — and were likely to see eye to eye.

"The end of two-headed rule," wrote Liberté. It added that while Mr. Malek's departure was no surprise the fact that the change came so soon after conclusion of an accord with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was unexpected.

Liberté added that it believed Mr. Malek's ouster was the result of pressure from legal opposition movements who favour dialogue with the FIS.

Le Matin said Mr. Malek's departure "marked a symbolic beginning for a new generation at the centre of decision-making."

Newspaper may close
An Algerian newspaper said it may not appear on the stands after Tuesday because printers had refused to issue more copies because of unpaid debts.
The anti-Islamist daily

Gulf Arabs discuss military integration

DUBAI (R) — The chiefs of staff of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held a closed-door meeting on Tuesday to discuss an ambitious plan to integrate regional air defence systems and more than double the size of a joint force.

The official Emirates News Agency said the Dubai meeting was attended by the GCC's secretary-general, Sheikh Fahim Ben Sultan Al Qassimi. A second session, open to delegation members, was to convene later on Tuesday.

The meeting is the first by a special committee which was formed at the last GCC summit in December in Riyadh to oversee the practical implementation of plans to boost and integrate Gulf Arab defences after the 1991 Gulf war.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) holds the committee's rotating chairmanship for the first year. The oil-rich GCC, formed in 1981, also groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain.

The GCC plans to boost the size of a Saudi-based joint defence force to 170,000 men from 8,000 and integrate naval and air force units into it, officials said.

GCC states last month concluded a joint naval manoeuvre off Oman while member states, who have often had tense relations with Iran, hold routine exercises with their Western allies involving a number of armed forces.

GCC states, which fought in the U.S.-led military alliance that forced Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991, are among the world's largest arms buyers and some have expressed concern over Iran's rearmament programme.

They hope to integrate their air defences and create a joint early warning system which will ring alarm bells around GCC states and trigger a response if any member is attacked, officials said.

China frees dissident Xu, family reports

BEIJING (R) — China on Tuesday freed veteran government critic Xu Wenli, relatives said, after five days of interrogation that fanned international controversy over its human rights practices.

"He called to say he was out and that there were no problems," Mr. Xu's sister told Reuters, recounting a morning telephone conversation between Mr. Xu and her husband.

Mr. Xu, 50, apparently calling from Beijing, said family members should not expect to see him for another two days but did not elaborate, his sister said by phone.

It was not known if he faced further investigation. Beijing earlier on Tuesday had defended its right to detain and question any citizen suspected of committing crimes and denounced the objections of the United States and other countries as "absolutely inappropriate."

"It entirely falls within China's sovereignty that Chinese public security organs summon and try according to law those who have broken criminal laws or violated legal provisions," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"It is absolutely inappropriate for any foreign government or individuals to make irresponsible remarks about it."

The ministry said on Monday that Mr. Xu, who had been grabbed by police on Thursday just 11 months after his early release from prison, had been accused of violating his parole terms.

The United States and numerous overseas human rights groups have criticised China's official harassment of its tiny dissident circles, and particularly its detention of Mr. Xu and top activist Wei Jingsheng.

At least three Shanghai activists were briefly detained at the weekend as French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur visited the city, suggesting that Beijing may have adopted a new policy of muzzling sensitive people during state visits.

MUNICH (R) — Germany, hit by a wave of violent Kurdish protests against arms supplies to Turkey, on Tuesday put 15 Kurds on trial for seizing a Turkish consulate last year and threatening to blow up their hostages.

Twelve Turkish citizens and one stateless man from Lebanon appeared before a high-security court in Munich as 2,500 police stood guard in the city against a banned protest rally by Kurds and German supporters.

The defendants refused to state their names at the start of the trial because they feared Turkish secret service agents were in the courtroom. Defence lawyers charged the panel of judges was politically influenced by calls from German leaders for militant Kurds to be deported swiftly after clashes with police last month. Chief Justice Ermin Brismann denied the charges.

in Munich last June 24 with 21 diplomatic workers and two visitors. The Kurds surrendered and freed the hostages unharmed after 14 hours.

Germany has been dragged into the long-standing conflict over a homeland sought by Kurds in Turkey because of its close ties to Ankara and its large Turkish immigrant population.

The Munich trial follows the latest round of violent Kurdish protests in Germany last month and allegations Turkey is using military aid from Bonn in its war against Kurdish separatists.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government suspended arms shipments to Ankara last week to investigate the charges by German human rights activists that Ankara has broken a bilateral pledge not to deploy German-supplied weapons against Kurdish rebels.

Foreign Minister Klaus Zinkel was due to speak to parliament on Wednesday on the state of Bonn's relations with Turkey, which Ankara said were strained.

COLUMN

Manila court orders arrest of Imelda Marcos

MANILA (R) — A Philippine Court Tuesday ordered the arrest of former first lady Imelda Marcos and three others on charges of conspiring to embezzle 97 million pesos (\$3.5 million) in state funds while she was in power. A court spokeswoman said an aide of Mrs. Marcos had called the court saying Mrs. Marcos was preparing to post the required bond of 200,000 pesos (\$7,270) to avoid being arrested for the two counts of embezzlement filed by state prosecutors. The widow of late President Ferdinand Marcos is facing dozens of other criminal and civil suits for allegedly helping her husband steal up to \$5 billion from the economy during their 20-year rule. The charges ranged from tax evasion to corruption and currency violations. Mrs. Marcos was sentenced by a court in September last year to 18 years in prison after she was convicted on two counts of corruption but is out on bail while the case is on appeal. Prosecutors said the 97 million pesos belonging to the now defunct Ministry of Human Settlements was embezzled by three senior ministry officials from 1984 to 1985. They said Mrs. Marcos, who headed the ministry, tried to cover up the crime by persuading her husband to classify the money as "confidential funds" to exempt it from audit. The ministry was in charge of welfare projects. The Marcoses were overthrown in a 1986 popular revolt. Ferdinand Marcos died in exile in Hawaii in 1989.

Zhirinovskiy spits back at protesters

STRASBOURG, France (R) — Russian nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy spat back and hurled stones and dirt at Jewish students who called him a neo-Nazi, and for good measure threatened them with an "atomic pistol." Some 100 protesters from the French Jewish Students Union, assembled outside the Russian consulate in the eastern city of Strasbourg, where Mr. Zhirinovskiy earlier rallied against the West in a speech to the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe. "I'll break your heads," he screamed in French from behind the fence of the consulate where he is staying, as many of the demonstrators chanted: "Zhirinovskiy, neo-Nazi." Some demonstrators spat at Mr. Zhirinovskiy and he spat back before picking up pieces of earth and gravel from the garden of the consulate and hurling them at the students. "I'll kill you with my atomic pistol," he shouted. France has warned Mr. Zhirinovskiy he faces expulsion if he makes trouble. To show its displeasure at his presence in the official Russian delegation, Paris has told him he may only stay for the one week of the session and may not leave Strasbourg. Mr. Zhirinovskiy has been accused of making anti-Semitic statements during his election campaign last year. He denies being an anti-Semite but says his party wants to combat the forces of Zionism. Reporters in his home city of Alma Ata have uncovered documents showing that his father was called Edelstein and that Mr. Zhirinovskiy changed his surname to conceal his Jewish roots.

Princess Diana under secret police watch

LONDON (R) — Britain's Princess Diana, who dismissed her official bodyguards earlier this year, is under secret surveillance by undercover police who have codenamed her "pink panther," a newspaper said. Today newspaper said that officers from Scotland Yard Police Headquarters routinely followed Princess Diana without her knowledge because they feared she was still a security risk despite her separation from her husband Prince Charles. "The news will come as a shock to the princess," the newspaper said. Royal security is traditionally high-profile but Princess Diana dismissed her royal protection officers earlier this year as part of a plan, announced last December, to cut down on her public activities and lead a more private life. British newspapers have published photographs of an unprotected Princess Diana on shopping trips and lunching with friends.